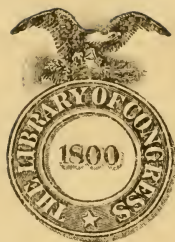


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"In Walked Jimmy"

BY

MINNIE Z. JAFFA



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



"In Walked Jimmy"

AN AMERICAN COMEDY OF
OPTIMISM IN FOUR ACTS

By *Jerberg*
MINNIE Z. JAFFA

125
1373

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JIMMY, who walked in. (Lead)
JOHN TRELLAVAN, owner of the "Cinderella Factory." (Character)
ARNOLD BAKER, his nephew. (Juvenile Heavy)
HIRAM HIGGINS, his landlord. (Character Comedy)
JOSIAH BARTLETT, a creditor from Rochester. (Character Heavy)
MOSES GRAHAM, a creditor from Rochester. (Utility)
BOBBIE DAY, shipping clerk at the factory. (Light Comedy)
BILLIE BLAKE, Kitty's brother. (Juvenile)
ANDY, negro at the factory. (Utility)
OFFICER. (Bit)
KITTY BLAKE, bookkeeper at the factory. (Lead)
MISS ROGERS, the factory's forelady. (Character Comedy)
Five girls who work at the desks in Second Act.
Factory girls, mail man, express man, etc.

SCENES

ACT I: Office, Stock and Shipping Room in the "Cinderella Soft Sole" (Baby Shoe) Factory. One day in April. 8.30 A.M.

"Into the Factory Walked—Jimmy!"

ACT II: Same scene as in Act I. A few moments later.

"Into the Hearts of Men and Women Walked—Jimmy!"

"IN WALKED JIMMY"

ACT III: Offices of the "Cinderella Corporation." One morning in December.

"Into Trouble Walked—Jimmy!"

ACT IV: Same scene as in Act Three. Nine days later.

"And—————!"

LOCALITY—A manufacturing town of about 4,000 population, near Rochester, New York.

TIME—The present.

JIMMY is the symbol of right thinking in the person of a clever young business man who combines practicality with humanitarianism. There is nothing of the "high-brow" about Jimmy. He has learned that a smile goes further than anything else in the world—that man's greatest power is Optimism! Spirituality blended with common sense is the keynote to Jimmy's character. He is mentally alert, lovable, heroic, intensely magnetic; at times, dashing romantic; then again, scientifically business-like, but always acting in the vein of refined comedy. He makes his entrance thrilling because he invests himself with a mysteriousness which always hovers about him,—until the final curtain.

JOHN: About 65—gray-haired, wrinkled, emaciated. The daily grind of business has deafened him to the cry of the spiritual, the call of the Divine, that prompts man to love, to laugh, to sing. Yet withal, he is a type of man with whom you sympathize and never censure. At opening of play, his eyes hold an almost vacant stare and his hands twitch nervously. As play progresses, he changes to a man who has found a new thing in life—the joy that emanates from

the Well-spring of Right Thinking. His reverence for Jimmy must be brought out strong. Shabby clothes in Acts I and II. Thereafter, well-clothed and groomed.

HIGGINS: Large man, buxom, loud-mouthed, red-faced, hard, harsh. The type of man who accumulates money by "bleeding others." Typical dress of the rich man of the village. About 50 years of age.

BARTLETT: Refined city man; progressive. Tall, stoutish.

GRAHAM: Small weazened-up man with a thin, little voice. Cityfied, but not over-confident.

BOBBY: Chap of 22. Slouchy of walk, manners and appearance. As he brightens mentally, he brushes up physically. A real man in Acts III and IV; well-groomed, prosperous.

ARNOLD: About 25. Tall, over-confident type of creature—a case of exaggerated ego; over-dressed; copies the style of the city chaps; is short on common sense and long on love-making.

KITTY: Sweet, lovable of disposition, but showing firmness of character. She is the kind of girl who, never having been called upon to prove to herself her great worth to the world, does not realize her own mental and spiritual resources. There must be every evidence, in acting the rôle, of strength and self-reliance. In first and second acts, a plain dress is worn. Thereafter, a suit—up-to-date! Kitty is about 24.

MISS ROGERS: Tall, angular features, pert expression; sharp thoughts; jerky diction. Hair, raven black and combed, slick back. Spectacles worn down on nose. Half of the time she looks over her spectacles, not through them, particu-

larly when she quotes, "My Mother's Sister used to say——" Not until play is half over does she "warm up" to life and its beauties. Part should be eccentrically dressed. In Act I—a loud gingham apron over a black dress. In Act II, a small hat which is perched at a dangerous angle and a small, tight-fitting, out-of-date coat add to the incongruity of Miss Rogers' appearance. In Act III, she wears the same small hat, and an odd, laughable suit that seems to accentuate her eccentricities. Miss Rogers is about 42 years old. This part should be played as strong character comedy.

“In Walked Jimmy”

ACT I

One day in April. 8.30 A.M. The Cinderella Soft Sole (Baby Shoe) Factory—office, stock room and shipping room.

SCENE: *One large room. Down R., against wall, stands a high bookkeeper's desk with shelves beneath and above it. High revolving chairs beside desk. To R. of desk is a typewriter on small table. Chair beside it. A row of old musty books is on shelf below desk. On desk is an old dusting brush. R.C., window opening on a fire-escape. Window, very dirty, looks out upon street. At back, on R., a large door which slides to R. When door is open, several girls can be seen working at machines, power propelled. Whirr of machinery is always heard when door slides to R. At back on L. is a small, square room shelved on three sides. Shelves extend to ceiling and hold a small stock of shoes in boxes, ready for shipping. Shelves are not quite full. Down C. stands a flat-top desk with a chair behind it. Desk has a few business accessories on it, besides a telephone and a small bell, which when tapped sounds like a telephone ringing. A long table extends from stock room, up L., to down R. Table is made of cheapest*

boards, unpainted. On it are various boxes, piled high in groups, ready to be wrapped up and sent away. Each group of boxes is already tied with string and is tagged with bright red tag, eight inches long. Door down L. is entrance to the factory. Along wall at L. stand cartons (pasteboard cases) in which shoes are shipped. Go-carts of trays of shoes ready to be put into boxes, stand beside table. Shoes are of all colors and each shoe is a baby shoe. Chairs stand here and there around room. One or two chairs hold a shipment. Each box used in factory is sized four by seven inches. Scraps of leather on floor. The factory has seen better days. For some time, its output has been gradually decreasing until now it is in its last struggling stage. There is every evidence that goods are being manufactured but the impression conveyed is they are not being manufactured right.

CURTAIN RISES

ANDY. (*An old negro man-of-all-work is cleaning up room; does practical work; rubs desk; makes mark on it; tries to wipe off the water spot. He registers consternation. Lightning—thunder*) Mr. Trellavan should hev real wood. Den dat water wouldn't leave no mark, I reckon. (*Works toward window; goes about his work, dusting off boxes, etc., in a very superficial manner*)

(BOBBY DAY, a chap of twenty-two, enters L.)

BOBBY. (*Has a worn look on his face; never smiles; lacks initiation; poorly clothed*) Morning, Andy!

ANDY. Goin' to rain ag'in, is it?

BOBBY. Looks like it, yes! (*Takes off his coat; hangs it on peg at end of table; takes from peg at other end of table a much older coat; shakes it out, puts coat on; begins to work, wrapping up groups of boxes on shipping table. Makes grouchy face; works with languor*)

ANDY. Fo' de love o' Moses, ain't it been rainin'? Las' night, it sho did spill some. Ain't seen de sun fo' days.

BOBBY. What's the difference? Whether one looks at raindrops or dewdrops—it's all the same.

ANDY. Lor', Mr. Bobby, yo' suttently am cheerful!

(KITTY BLAKE, a pretty girl of twenty-two, enters

L. *She is cheaply dressed in a plain, but attractive gingham dress. There is a tired expression in her face; a lack of animation in her walk; no spirit of cheerfulness in her voice. She appears to be resigned to life—and what it may bring to her*)

KITTY. (*As she enters, there is no smile from her*) Morning, Bobby, Andy! (*Crosses to R. Takes off her hat; hangs it on nail above her desk; opens top of desk; takes out ink, ledgers, etc. Also small mirror which she hangs at R. of desk. Turns to BOBBY as she sits at her desk*) What about that Moss-Gray order to go to Walla Walla, Washington?

BOBBY. I filled it out of stock, checked it up, tied it up; now, I'm going to wrap it up, put the label on it, stand it over there—(*Points to L.*)—for the expressman; let him sign for it and away it goes!

KITTY. I worried half the night about that order. I knew no bill had been made out for it and I

thought the order had been sent. We can't afford to let goods go out without charging them up.

(READY CRASH—READY LIGHTNING)

BOBBY. Do you get paid *extra* for worrying? You do it all the time.

KITTY. Did that St. Paul shipment go? (*Working at ledger. ANDY is working at back*)

BOBBY. Yes. (*Sighs. Having wrapped up one shipment and labelled it, he puts it on floor at L. Begins on another*) Same old thing every day. Gee, it's fierce!

KITTY. Mr. John hasn't come down yet, has he?

BOBBY. No! If "I" came down later, he'd "fire" me—P.D.Q.!!

ANDY. (*Back of desk*) Lor' bless his soul, Mr. Trellavan's a fine man, sho is! He gibbs me a quarter ebery week. Den I done gone an' spoilt his desk.

BOBBY. He's liberal.

ANDY. Sho is. He helps me an' m' ol' lady.

BOBBY. And children.

ANDY. (*Seriously; vehemently*) I ain't got no CHIL'REN—JUS' ONE SON!!! (*Pause. They all work in silence. It becomes darker and darker, outside. A spirit of pessimism prevails*)

ANDY. It sho am goin' to rain.

KITTY. Andy, I must ask you to keep quiet. You disturb me.

ANDY. I reckon I'll keep quiet soon enough, Missy. I'se purty ol'.

BOBBY. You shouldn't feel bad about that. You'll be resting peacefully before long while we—we'll be here ALIVE—and WORKING FOR A LIVING!

KITTY. (*Looks at letter in her hand; shows it to*

ANDY) Andy, go to the express office and see about this shipment.

ANDY. Yessum. (*As he crosses to L., he mutters to himself*) You know, dat son o' mine— (*Shakes his head worriedly, as he exits L.*)

(MISS ROGERS, a woman of thirty-five, enters L. *She is tall, angular, decidedly eccentric in her mannerisms and speech. She wears a woe-begone expression, as though she had lost everything that, and everybody whom, she had ever loved. She is bitter, gossipy*)

MISS ROGERS. (*Crosses to c., hurriedly*) Have you two heard the latest? Scandalous, isn't it?

KITTY. (*Seriously*) You mean about this factory?

MISS ROGERS. Yes. (*She crosses to R., takes off her hat, goes to KITTY's mirror, puts dab of powder on her face; then, anxiously*) My mother's sister's cousin heard Mr. Bartlett tell Mr. Somebody else down in Rochester that Mr. Trellavan had not paid a certain bill that's overdue four months. And Mr. Bartlett said he was going to send the Cinderella Factory into bankruptcy!

BOBBY. Who's Mr. Bartlett?

MISS ROGERS. I don't know anything about the man—but his leathers have a FINE REPUTATION.

KITTY. If only Mr. Trellavan would advertise—like Mr. Bartlett does.

MISS ROGERS. Bartlett's wise. He knows advertising's nothing but bait for suckers to bite on. Oh, well, I'd better go about my work. (*MISS ROGERS walks to back; stops at window*) It's going to rain again. Oh, well, as long as one MUST LIVE, one may just as well make the best of it. (*Says this very gloomily*)

BOBBY. Going to take a vacation this year, Miss Rogers?

MISS ROGERS. What's the use? It's just as hot in the city as in this town.

BOBBY. Thought you were going to the seashore.

MISS ROGERS. One gets so FRECKLED there. And that's one thing men can't stand for—freckles! *(She exits back, as she puts on her apron)*

KITTY. I like her. She has such a PLEASANT disposition. *(No smile from anyone so far)*

(Enter at L. ARNOLD BAKER, twenty-three, dressed up to the minute in fashion; supercilious; shallow)

BOBBY. Yes, she has—NOT! *(Exits L.)*

ARNOLD. Has my uncle come in yet?

KITTY. No, Mr. Arnold.

ARNOLD. Know anything about a telegram he sent to my sister, Kitty? *(Crosses to R.; smiles at her impertinently)*

KITTY. "Miss" Kitty, please, Mr. Arnold. *(He crosses to JOHN TRELLAVAN's desk; sits on it; rolls cigarette)* Your sample case is back of the shipping table.

(Enter L. JOHN TRELLAVAN, an old man of sixty-five; the owner of the factory. As such, he presents a poor appearance; his clothes sag, his shoulders droop. However, he gives evidence of being well-educated. His voice is soft, his manners gentle. He is honest, hard-working, sadly contemplative. Competition has been too keen for him. He knows he is drowning in the Sea of Commercialism. He is ready to give up, to admit he is a failure)

JOHN. Good morning. I'm a little late to-day. You're early, Miss Kitty. *(He crosses to his desk.)*

Mail man enters L, leaves a stack of mail. JOHN begins to open letters)

KITTY. I have much work to do. All the statements for the month have not been mailed.

ARNOLD. (*Takes a few steps from desk; watches JOHN open letters*) Is it true, Uncle, Phyllis is coming home?

JOHN. I sent for her yesterday. She will be home to-day. (*Continues glancing over mail. BOBBY exits back with empty go-cart. KITTY is working fast*)

ARNOLD. Then what I heard is true?

JOHN. What was that?

ARNOLD. As I was passing Jones's Undertaking Parlors, I heard Mr. Jones, who was standing on his front step, say, "Something's wrong with Trelavan. Better find out what's the trouble. He's looking worse every day."

JOHN. (*Looks up from his letters*) He said THAT? To whom?

ARNOLD. Our family physician.

JOHN. (*Fingering letters nervously*) A good combination—the family physician and the undertaker! (*He takes up one letter; looks it over with a haunting fear in his eyes*)

ARNOLD. What's wrong, Unc?

JOHN. Everything. Listen to this. (*Reads letter*) "The Cinderella Co., Gentlemen:—We regret we must remind you the enclosed bill is ninety days overdue. We have written you several times regarding this item and your inattention to this forces us to use more stringent methods. Our Mr. J. Bartlett will call upon you and unless satisfactory arrangements can be made, we will place your account in the hands of our attorneys for collection. Yours very truly, Bartlett and Company."

ARNOLD. We may not like the language they use

—but we can't find fault with their grammar, Unc.

JOHN. This has been a dull season. Our bills have been large. We're behind—I know that—but we could pull through if—if Bartlett wouldn't press us——

ARNOLD. Why don't you go over to Rochester and tell them you're ready to go broke, but if they'll come to the rescue, maybe the ship will not sink! (*Sitting on edge of shipping table, smoking a cigarette*)

JOHN. (*Stares at ARNOLD, astonished at his stupidity*) I need not only extension of credit. I need leathers—stock—I must have both to continue business.

ARNOLD. You have never seen Bartlett or Graham, have you?

JOHN. I do all my business with them through the mails.

KITTY. (*Rises; crosses to JOHN's desk, down c.*) We have \$22,000 on our books—all of which is nearly due.

(READY LIGHTNING—THUNDER)

JOHN. But we owe—— (*He buries his face in his hands*) It's over—— (*ARNOLD comes c.; puffs at cigarette. JOHN looks up at him*) My boy, I'm afraid I will not live to see my ambition fulfilled. Your mother and I used to build childish castles, and now—I promised her I would leave you and Phyllis well provided for—but—she's gone—your father's gone—and my hopes are—— (*Tries to conquer himself*)

KITTY. Mr. John, I have \$200 in the bank. If you think that would help you——

JOHN. Thank you, Miss Kitty. No! (*Begins to write; pause*) I want you to take this check. Then go out and look for another position. (*JOHN rises; hands KITTY the check. She refuses it.*)

JOHN *crosses to KITTY's desk; puts check upon it; crosses back to his desk at c.)*

ARNOLD. What's the use of trying her luck with another factory? It's just as liable to go bankrupt as this one. (JOHN *is sitting at his desk, writing*)

JOHN. A letter of recommendation——

(MISS ROGERS *enters back, with lead pencils sticking in her hair and a bunch of tags in her hand: she is very businesslike in her attitude*)

MISS ROGERS. Mr. John, our leather stock is running very low. (*It is so dark now that JOHN is obliged to turn on the lights. From where she stands, MISS ROGERS can see out of the window. Thunder! MISS ROGERS glances out of window just when a flash of lightning plays vividly around the fire-escape. MISS ROGERS moves away from window, frightened comically*) I just hate lightning. A cousin of an uncle of my mother was KILLED by it.

JOHN. (*Sitting at his desk, writing*) How low are we on leathers?

MISS ROGERS. We are all out of everything but—THE BLUES!

JOHN. No blacks, no whites—Miss Rogers, here's a letter of recommendation and—a check! (*Gives her both; for a moment she appears surprised*)

MISS ROGERS. I am fired?

JOHN. You understand, Miss Rogers, we can't go on manufacturing without goods—and——

MISS ROGERS. I understand—— (*Exits at back*)

ARNOLD. I suppose it's up to me to look for something to do—just as I was beginning to be a success. (*KITTY exits at back*)

JOHN. Did you say SUCCESS? (*Very surprised*)

ARNOLD. (*JOHN sits silent. ARNOLD puffs away, poiselessly*) Sure! I've been doing lots of thinking the past four months.

JOHN. I'm glad to know you did something. You didn't sell any shoes.

ARNOLD. Oh, I made friends all along the line. (*Sits on KITTY's chair at R.*)

JOHN. You advertised clear Havanas all along the line. Your cigar bill last month amounted to——

ARNOLD. (*Interrupts enthusiastically*) Did I tell you what Conroy said to me yesterday? He owns the largest store in Buffalo. He said, "I like you and if I need any shoes the next time you come around, I may place an order with you." How's that?

JOHN. He likes the brand of cigars you give away. How many did it cost you to hear that?

ARNOLD. That's encouragement.

JOHN. He's been telling you that every week for four months.

ARNOLD. He's not the only one. No less than fifty men PROMISED me business.

JOHN. That's all you got—promises! If you could have traded in those fifty promises for FIVE ORDERS——

ARNOLD. You couldn't expect me to come from college and enter business life as though I'd had experience. Football and selling baby shoes are two entirely DIFFERENT GAMES.

JOHN. I know that, Arnold.

ARNOLD. I tell you a man's up against a pretty stiff proposition trying to make a buyer believe every baby living wears shoes. With all this eugenic stuff

coming in so strong, women are letting their babies go barefooted. It's healthier and CHEAPER.

JOHN. Did you give an argument like that to your customers?

ARNOLD. I burnt the candle at both ends. One month I argue about everything BUT shoes. The next month, I argued nothing but shoes. One moment, I was a regular good fellow; the next, a salesman.

JOHN. The first principle of the art of salesmanship is understanding human nature.

ARNOLD. You told me to cater to a man's whims and I'd sell him goods. You said, "Find his weak spot; play to it." I followed your advice. I said to old man Johnson, down in Syracuse, "I wish you could have a drink on me." And what did he do? He kicked me out of his store. (*Both men are serious; no smile*) He's the only man I met in four months who didn't tell me I'm a live wire with the spark of success, at the other end.

JOHN. He doesn't smoke, does he?

ARNOLD. No! (*Pause. ARNOLD rises. JOHN is very worried*) Uncle, I never liked selling shoes.

JOHN. How do you know? You never sold any.

ARNOLD. I always wanted to be something bigger than a shoe salesman. I'd like to be a millionaire—and if I can't be that—a politician for me!

(*Enter ANDY, at L.*)

ANDY. Dere's a shipment down to de depot. Won't gib it to me. Saiys, express am collect.

JOHN. Arnold, will you attend to it?

ARNOLD. There must be something wrong with the way you manufacture. Nearly every shipment that goes out comes back. (*Takes up his hat; exits to L.*) Oh, Unc, after I've been to the depot, you

won't mind if I pitch right in and land a \$3,000 per year job?

JOHN. You have my blessing.

ARNOLD. Good-bye, Unc. Now don't you worry about me. (*Exits L. JOHN rises; sees ANDY; gives him a coin*)

JOHN. I will not need you after to-day, Andy.

ANDY. Suh—

JOHN. I will not need you after to-day.

ANDY. (*Frightened*) Ain't I done m' dooty by yo'? Ain't I done got all your boxes an' packages fo' de las'—

JOHN. Yes, Andy.

ANDY. Ain't I always cleaned your windows, suh? (*Turns coin over and over*) Goin' away, suh?

JOHN. (*As a new thought comes to him*) Perhaps!

ANDY. Far away, suh?

JOHN. Yes. The longest journey I've ever undertaken—the journey that knows—no end!

ANDY. Reckon, suh, you'll need a valet?

JOHN. No!

(READY PHONE)

ANDY. I'm powerful glad I cleaned up fo' yo'. (*KITTY enters. Crosses to her desk at R.*) Yo' won't find a speck o' dirt nowhere. I cleaned up dis place jus' lak I did de las' house I work at. Lor', how I cleaned fo' dat funeral. Yo' could tell by de dirt in de cracks der war no ceremony in dat house fo' YEARS! (*JOHN digs in his pocket; gives another coin to ANDY*) Lor' bless yo' soul—and KEEP—IT—WHITE—suh!

(ANDY exits back. BOBBY enters back, wheeling go-cart with trays of shoes. Pause. JOHN sits thinking)

JOHN. Miss Kitty, will you call up Graham & Co., Rochester, please? (He begins to file away some letters as KITTY comes to his desk to use phone)

KITTY. (At c., by JOHN's desk; speaks into mouthpiece) Long distance . . . Rochester, please . . . (JOHN, worried and lifeless, sits the figure of abject woe. He stops filing away his letters. BOBBY begins to pack shoes. It is raining outside) . . . Graham and Company, please. . . .

(Expressman enters L. BOBBY gives him six packages; expressman signs for them; exits L.)

JOHN. (To KITTY) Mr. Bartlett is coming here to-day.

KITTY. (Into phone) Graham and Company? . . . Hold the wire. . . . What? (To JOHN) Which Mr. Graham do you want to speak to?

JOHN. The little fat one.

KITTY. (Into phone) Hello . . . Yes . . . The small, stout gentleman . . . What? . . . Wait a moment. . . . (To JOHN) Has he light or dark hair? There are TWO little fat Mr. Grahams.

JOHN. He's bald. (Very seriously)

KITTY. I want to speak to the small, stout gentleman with the least amount of hair. . . . Hello. . . . What? . . . Hold the wire. . . . (JOHN picks up phone. KITTY crosses to her desk; goes to work)

JOHN. This is John Trellavan talking, Mr. Graham. . . . Yes, I received your letter this morning. . . . I should like to have you come to see me. . . . It was your intention, eh? . . . Immediately. . . . Good-bye. . . . (Hangs up receiver. A groan es-

capas from him; he sits with his head in his hands. Telephone rings. JOHN pays no attention to it. KITTY answers phone)

KITTY. (*Into phone*) Hello. . . . Yes. . . . (*To JOHN*) Telephone, Mr. John. (*KITTY taps JOHN's shoulder in an effort to awaken him to his duties. JOHN looks up blankly*) Telephone. (*KITTY gives phone to JOHN*)

JOHN. Hello. . . . Who? . . . Mr. Higgins? . . . (*Consternation registers on JOHN's face*) Just arrived? . . . What? . . . Coming to see me? . . . Very well. (*Hangs up receiver. To KITTY*) Higgins just got back to town. He's coming right up.

KITTY. Looks like you're giving a reception, Mr. John.

JOHN. Yes. A twenty-cent-on-the-dollar reception. (*BOBBY has packed pairs of shoes in boxes; places them on shelf. JOHN exits back*)

BOBBY. Wonder what's the matter with the boss?

KITTY. I don't want to be wishing myself too much, Bobby, but I would like to see you ONCE—when you're not talking.

BOBBY. Say, Kit, what's the matter? IN LOVE?

KITTY. No!

BOBBY. You're not as romantic as I am, are you?

KITTY. I can't be romantic by myself, can I? (*With a tinge of sentiment, but without a smile*) I might be—if the right man came along. (*BOBBY has stopped working; hears someone coming; gets back to work with a vim and dash, as MISS ROGERS enters back, wearing her hat*)

MISS ROGERS. Still working? My mother's sister used to say, "A dollar in the hand is sometimes worth more than five hundred on a piece of paper." I'm off to cash my check. Oh, have you heard the news?

BOBBY. About the hold-up?

MISS ROGERS. I knew somebody would beat me to it. (*Vindictively, to BOBBY*) Some people have such a mean disposition!

KITTY. What is it? I haven't heard——

BOBBY. The train was held up last night——

MISS ROGERS. No, it was early this morning. Think of it—a hold-up—just like the ones in the movies! Three men held up the train at Devil's Curve and tried to rob the express cars, but the crew and some of the passengers frightened them off——

BOBBY. They're sure to be caught for the officers have a good description of them and——

MISS ROGERS. Two of them went north and were seen distinctly; one, a tall, red-faced man, and the other, short and stout. But the third man disappeared completely. No one knows anything about him, except that he wore—— (*Describe JIMMY's clothing in Act I*) Isn't it the limit? Well, my mother's aunt's cousin used to say, "If there were no crimes in the world, there could not be any newspapers." (*Exits into stock room*)

(*ANDY enters with telegram*)

BOBBY. What's wrong now?

ANDY. Telegram fo' de boss.

KITTY. I'll take it.

ANDY. De Lor' only knows what's goin' to come o' dis nigger. You know, Mr. Bobby, dat son o' mine——

BOBBY. Don't tell it to me. I've got troubles of my own. (*Exits L.*)

ANDY. Trouble? Seems like I'm ol' man Trouble's only son. (*Exits back. Telephone rings. KITTY answers it*)

KITTY. Cinderella Factory. . . . Who? . . . The First National Bank. I'll tell Mr. Trellavan. (*Exits back*)

(*JOHN enters back*)

(*LIGHTNING! THUNDER! RAIN!*)

JOHN. (*Takes up receiver; talks into phone*) Hello. . . . Mr. Harper. . . . I know it, but if you would only give me a little time . . . Yes, I know, it's overdue, but my collections are slow and for God's sake, don't do that, Mr. Harper, you'll force me into bank—— Hello! Hello! . . . (*He hangs up the receiver; then says, half to himself*) It's no use—— (*JOHN sees the telegram on his desk; opens it; reads*) "Countermand entire order given your salesman March 13th." *Puts telegram down; pause; he opens his desk drawer; takes from it a revolver; he sees that it is loaded; looks at it a moment; puts it down; walks over to his safe; opens it; takes out a few papers; reads*) "Metropolitan Insurance Co. In favor of Phyllis Baker, the sum of ten thousand dollars—— (*Stops; puts papers back in safe. Comes back to his desk. Stands there a moment. Looks at revolver; picks it up, slowly, carefully in his right hand, as though he were contemplating shooting himself. Very, very slowly, he raises revolver to his temple. Stage is now darkened. Light on window, showing the rain coming down in torrents. Light on JOHN's face*)

JIMMY. (*Off stage in a low and mysterious tone*) Wait a minute! What's your hurry? (*JIMMY enters left. He is a young fellow of about twenty-eight or thirty; well-dressed. A broad smile plays around his mouth and, when he speaks, there is a superiority about him that specializes him from*

the townspeople. His voice is low and beautiful. His demeanor is that of a perfect gentleman. There is an infinite lightness, delicacy and finesse about JIMMY that are irresistibly contagious. He is, at once, a lovable man who is endowed with the strength of beauty and the beauty of strength. He wears a slouch hat, a blue Norfolk suit, a tan rain coat and tan shoes) Think it over—another day.

JOHN. (*As his right hand is lowered; weakly*) But——

JIMMY. (*With much finesse, delivered with that unconquerable spirit of adventure*) Oh, I know what I am—and I know what I've done—and it isn't the first time. I've helped people out of burning buildings. I've rescued them from the ocean's mighty grasp. I once clung to a raft with a foolish woman who thought she hated her husband. I've been under trolley cars saving babies for mothers about to be deprived of the love of their offspring. I've interrupted at least twenty men who were going to Kingdom Come by the Revolver Route. And after I saved them, they were happy and lived prosperously ever after. (*Takes JOHN's hands in his; shakes it hard*) How do you do? My name is——

JOHN. Who are you and what do you want here? (*Rises*)

JIMMY. I want a position. (*Gesture of despair from JOHN*) I'm ready to do anything from cleaning windows to cobbling shoes. If you urge me real hard, I might even be willing to scrub the floors. Yes, sir, I'm dead broke, before you ask me. I am dead broke—just like you!

JOHN. (*Surprised*) What?

JIMMY. Oh, don't tell me you're not. No man wants to kill himself for the fun of it. It's because life isn't easy sailing. The sun doesn't shine; it's

dark, and the coast is not clear. So he pulls a trigger and his tombstone is marked with one word, "COWARD"!

JOHN. (*Slowly, meditatively, he turns the revolver over and over; then he puts it on his desk; looks at JIMMY sternly*) I have no position for you, at present. Good-day!

JIMMY. Good-day? I just came. And you—you haven't asked me to be seated. Please—even after what has happened, let me think of you as a gentleman! (*With infinite zest. He laughs*)

JOHN. (*As JIMMY sits c., JOHN cries out, explosively*) Why did you come here? (*Rain off*)

JIMMY. They couldn't give me a position downstairs in the mahogany factory. And I'm determined to remain in this building. I like it. The fire-escape attracts me. It's such a funny looking thing. Would you believe it, I've been all over the world—and I've never seen a fire-escape like it!

JOHN. (*Half-angrily*) You're jesting! Why, man, you're laughing!

JIMMY. Yes, sir. Don't you love laughter? I do! It is one of God's choicest gifts. Ah, the tinkle of a laugh—what is it—but the Spring Song in the heart of every man. (*Very romantically*)

JOHN. (*Sadly*) When you're as old as I am——

JIMMY. I blew into this town at 6.45 this morning, after dreaming all night of a miracle that's going to happen to-day.

JOHN. Miracles don't happen in these days, my boy.

JIMMY. God is just as good to His people to-day as He was 5,000 years ago.

JOHN. I wish I could think that.

JIMMY. You can. All you need do is—SMILE! Before you know it you'll be laughing—and then you'll begin to think all kinds of good things. And

you'll end by saying, "Life is a mighty fine thing, after all!"

JOHN. (*Wonderingly; looks at JIMMY with a sort of awe*) Of what creed are you, my boy?

JIMMY. I have NO CREED! That's why I am so full of RELIGION!

JOHN. (*Becoming more interested in JIMMY; draws his chair closer*) May I inquire what your business is?

JIMMY. Doing one big thing wherever I go. (JOHN, *amazed, stares at JIMMY*) Never heard of a business like that?

JOHN. N—o—oh!

JIMMY. My assets are health and wealth of body and mind and the dividends accruing from my business are the dividends of life, love and laughter. (JOHN *is impressed with JIMMY's keen sense of optimistic truths*)

JOHN. Where do you live?

JIMMY. Wherever I am—at the moment. (JIMMY's *rollicking manner baffles JOHN*) What I am saying puzzles you.

JOHN. (*Upstage, with his back to audience; wheels around suddenly*) It does. How did you know it?

JIMMY. (*Sits c. with his back to JOHN*) You wrinkled your brow.

JOHN. I did, but you couldn't see it.

JIMMY. No, but I could FEEL it. The whole atmosphere was charged with doubt.

JOHN. (*Comes forward, face to face with JIMMY*) When a man hopes, as I have, and then finds his ambitions frustrated, that, after all, he's a failure,—my boy, under such conditions, can a man keep from doubting? Before you came in, I asked myself, is life worth while. I'd even gotten to doubting THAT.

JIMMY. That's because you are tired.

JOHN. (*Reminiscently. As speech progresses, he again becomes the fighting man, railing against a Fate that he thinks has kept him down*) At eighteen, I started out to earn my own living. I've been at it ever since. Day by day, it's been the merciless grind that takes men's souls and tears them apart in the anguish of beating the other man in the game. It's been work—work every minute—work to beat the man around the corner—work to forge ahead of all competitors—work—work—WORK!

JIMMY. (*Rises. Crosses to JOHN; faces him with both his hands on JOHN's shoulders*) One has only to look at you to know that you've been so eager to beat the other man, you've grown old forgetting to watch for the stars, to listen to the babbling of the brook—to smile, to sing, to laugh. That's what keeps one young, creates happiness, and makes one GREAT! (*Smiles*) Will you give me a position?

JOHN. (*Smiles sadly*) Position? Even if we were not about to make an assignment—I—I couldn't afford it.

JIMMY. Then give me a job. It will be a couple dollars cheaper for you.

JOHN. Now you're laughing at me again.

JIMMY. That's because I'm beginning to see myself as manager of this factory.

JOHN. Manager?

JIMMY. You can't keep a man down when his heart's happy and his soul is full of laughter.

JOHN. I dreamed, too, when I was your age. I saw only success. How I dreamed! In wild extravagance of thought, I saw myself a Merchant Prince, owner of dozens of factories. Once I dreamed this would be my private office——(*Points to back stage*) There I'd have five girls,

writing out telephone orders, posting books, advertising to our accounts. Once it was my aim to have twenty THOUSAND accounts on my books. Once I thought the day would come when I could employ one girl to take charge of answering letters, refusing loans from the large banking institutions. Think of it. I had hoped we would be so big I wouldn't need to borrow money.

(WHITES UP TO ONE-HALF)

JIMMY. You're not the only person who has hoped that.

JOHN. My creditors are pressing me. I haven't the available cash—no collateral to borrow on. (*Turns to window sadly*) I expect my creditors any minute.

(BOBBY enters back)

BOBBY. You're wanted in the cutting room, Mr. John. (*He crosses to cutting table*)

JOHN. (*To JIMMY*) Don't go, young man. I will not be long. (*Starts to cross toward back*)

MISS ROGERS. (*Enters back*) Oh, Mr. Trellavan, the lasts for that Utica order are——

JOHN. Will you wait just a moment, please? I will not be long. (*This to JIMMY. He exits back*)

BOBBY. (*Aside to MISS ROGERS*) Bet he's one of our creditors. Which one? Graham or Bartlett?

MISS ROGERS. I'm a respectable woman. I don't know QUITE ALL the men who come to this town. (*BOBBY exits back quickly*)

JIMMY. (*Walks to c.; smiles at MISS ROGERS sweetly*) Good morning, Miss——

MISS ROGERS. (*Fears someone may see her talking to the stranger*) In this town, it is not customary to talk to a gentleman without the formality of an introduction.

JIMMY. Formality, dear Miss Smith, is the religion of fools! Wise men discard it.

MISS ROGERS. (*Kittenish, and at the same time very interested in JIMMY*) My name is Rogers—Delie Rogers!

JIMMY. (*Bows, gentleman-like*) Miss Rogers—delighted! (*Notices MISS ROGERS is faintly smiling*) Are you employed here?

MISS ROGERS. Ever since I was a child. When I started to work, I was the little BLOND stenographer that sat over there—in that corner. (*Points up R. NOTE: Now MISS ROGERS' hair is raven black*)

JIMMY. You have held the position ever since?

MISS ROGERS. I was fired once, because I liked oranges too well. Ate six in one day. Mr. Trellavan said I wasted too much time "peeling" them.

JIMMY. Who said that?

MISS ROGERS. Mr. Trellavan, the owner of this factory. But he took me back the following day—and made me his fore-lady, and now the business is going up the spout!

JIMMY. (*As he gives the room a sweeping glance*) So it's goodnight, eh?

MISS ROGERS. Yes, and I must look for another position.

JIMMY. Let us hope it will be a permanent one this time.

MISS ROGERS. The nearest thing to a permanent position is marriage! And that's nothing but a matter of business, these days. Just like manufacturing baby shoes, for instance. And competition in the game is getting awfully strong. (*JIMMY stares at her, surprised*) You see, I've thought a great deal about marriage.

JIMMY. (*Casually*) Sure, you have. Only two kinds of females don't think of it. Old maids, 'cause

they're out of the game—and infants, 'cause they're not yet in it. (*Laughs. BOBBY enters back, with go-cart of shoes; places go-cart near shipping table*)

BOBBY. Say, Miss Rogers, the Boss wants to see you. (*He exits back*)

MISS ROGERS. (*Has been eyeing JIMMY keenly*) I live two doors to the EAST of Jones's Undertaking Parlors on Main Street. If you should become lonesome while here, come to see me.

JIMMY. I shall remember your kind words!

MISS ROGERS. (*Keeps coming up back*) You understand, there'll be no sentiment attached to your visit. As my mother used to say, "Life's just one business deal after another." Remember, two doors to the EAST of Jones's Undertaking Parlors.

JIMMY. Ah, Miss Rogers, you're just beautiful when you smile like that. (*MISS ROGERS laughs in embarrassment; then exits back in very good humor. While the smile business is going on between MISS ROGERS and JIMMY, BOBBY enters back; watches them for a second*)

BOBBY. Maybe the Boss has forgotten that you're waiting. Shall I call him, Mr.——

JIMMY. (*Focusing his smile at BOBBY with significance*) Oh, I'm in no hurry.

BOBBY. No one ever is around here—except the people who come looking for their money.

JIMMY. What's the matter, son? You look as though you're ill.

BOBBY. (*Grouchy*) Well, I'm NOT. I can't afford to be. (*BOBBY looks at JIMMY in disgust. JIMMY smiles back, expansively. BOBBY's grouch disappears; he begins to look more amiable. JIMMY holds his smile. BOBBY begins to weaken under the power of it—begins to grin a bit, then smiles. JIMMY laughs. BOBBY exits, smiling, at back. For*

a moment, JIMMY watches BOBBY off; then he takes from his pocket a railroad ticket)

JIMMY. The unused portion of my railroad ticket. *(Puts it back in pocket. Sees revolver on JOHN'S desk; unloads it. Places revolver on desk; takes some money from his pocket; counts it)* Four dollars and thirty-seven cents. *(Gives evidence that is the extent of his finances. Smiles, as he jingles money in his hands. KITTY enters back)*

KITTY. Were you waiting for Mr. Trellavan? *(JIMMY smiles at KITTY)* I'm sorry if you've been kept waiting, but Mr. Trellavan's very busy.

JIMMY. Good! Then he'll be in fine humor.

KITTY. Mr. John is always in good humor. I'm sorry if you've had to wait very long, Mr.—Mr.——

JIMMY. Oh, that's all right. I have as much patience as Job. *(Telephone rings. KITTY answers it)*

KITTY. Hello. . . . Yes, Mr. Perkins . . . I told Mr. Trellavan what you said . . . that we're overdrawn . . . yes, about that note, too. *(Sees JIMMY; tries to correct herself; cleverly)* But that's impossible. . . . Yes, I'm coming down now—— *(She turns her back towards JIMMY; hangs up receiver; talks as though she were speaking into phone. JIMMY catches her at it)* Of course, you're wrong. I deposited \$2,000 yesterday—and——

JIMMY. Pardon me. *(Crosses to shipping table; picks up his hat; puts it on; then takes it off to her, with a bow, while KITTY stands, wondering what he means)* You see, I want to take it off to you. You're the gamest little lady I've ever met. *(A little sentiment creeps into his voice)* You're the kind who can help a man.

KITTY. *(Softly, as she looks at him, a bit bewildered)* What do you mean by that?

JIMMY. A glance to the observing is sufficient.

This factory is a dead one. And you—you're putting up a brave fight.

KITTY. Oh, you're Mr. Bartlett!

JIMMY. And you?

KITTY. Kitty Blake, bookkeeper!

JIMMY. (*Quickly*) Miss or Mrs.?

KITTY. Miss! (JIMMY *heaves a sigh of relief; smiles; sighs again*) Mr. Bartlett, if only you and Mr. Graham would let Mr. John down easy, everything would come out all right. We have \$22,000 on our books. It's true we can't lay our hands on that amount at once—but— (*Pause; she looks into his eyes, very seriously. JIMMY feels a growing admiration for her surging within him*) Mr. John's worked so hard. There hasn't been a night in five years that he hasn't been down here at his desk. His only aim in life is to leave his niece and nephew well off. He's old and hasn't many years to live. Won't you help him?

JIMMY. I can't—with absent treatment. And he doesn't seem to want to see me.

KITTY. (*Pleads beautifully; JIMMY smiles*) If I could only reach your heart some way. (JIMMY *smiles again*) I want what I have said to make an impression.

JIMMY. I assure you, Miss Blake, it HAS. (KITTY *exits to L. JIMMY stops her*) How long have you been employed here?

KITTY. Four years. Making a living is a necessity with me.

JIMMY. Your parents are—

KITTY. Perhaps you remember, Mr. Bartlett, when my father passed on. They called him "Honest Jack Blake."

JIMMY. The man who saved a woman's life—and lost his own? The papers were full of it. I remember.

KITTY. My mother followed—a week later.

JIMMY. You are alone?

KITTY. I have a brother—a fine fellow—just eighteen.

JIMMY. You have lived here all your life?

KITTY. Yes, sir! In the little white house two doors to the WEST of Jones's Undertaking Parlors.

JIMMY. Is Jones's Undertaking Parlors the center of the town?

KITTY. Oh, I forgot, you never come here. (*Turns towards back*) I'll tell Mr. John you are here.

JIMMY. Don't! (*KITTY stops*) Not just yet. Do you know, I like you. I feel that we are going to be great friends.

KITTY. (*Aghast*) Mr. Bartlett!!!!

JIMMY. What's the matter? Did it hurt you to smile?

KITTY. You are married—and you have two children. (*JIMMY laughs heartily. KITTY is very astonished; pause*) You are NOT Mr. Bartlett? Who are you?

JIMMY. Suppose we say—Jimmy! And I plead one discredit to the rest of my name. I have never been a husband. (*KITTY laughs*) Miss Blake, you are just beautiful when you smile like that!

(*Enter JOHN at back*)

JOHN. (*Crossing to down stage*) Miss Kitty, will you check the invoice on the Footform Company's shipment. There's some mistake——

JIMMY. (*To KITTY*) Let's see, are you EAST or WEST?

KITTY. East or West?

JIMMY. Of Jones's Undertaking Parlors? (*Smiles at KITTY as she stands at back*)

KITTY. (*Laughingly*) West! (*She smiles at him, as she exits back, as HIRAM HIGGINS enters L. He is a large, burly man, the type who lands a business deal in a business manner, without a touch of sentiment*)

HIGGINS. I want to talk to you, Trellavan. Here's a bill for you—and—— (*His eyes glisten, as he crosses to JOHN who seems to shrivel up at the sight of HIGGINS*)

JOHN. I'll pay you, Mr. Higgins. My—my book-keeper is out——

HIGGINS. Always an excuse, eh? If all my tenants were like you, I'd be in the poorhouse.

JOHN. You're a rich man, Mr. Higgins. You don't need the money.

HIGGINS. (*As he says the following, JIMMY takes off his coat to give the impression he is working. HIGGINS flares a lease*) This here lease calls for payment on the first of every month. Business is business! (*JOHN turns; sees JIMMY at his desk, pretending to be busy with some papers. HIGGINS crosses to down R.*)

JIMMY. Won't you have a chair, Mr. Higgins?

HIGGINS. Do I look so old I can't stand up, eh? I can sit down in my own building if I want to, and I don't need an invitation, neither! (*Crosses to R.; stands pulling out all his pockets, looking for something*)

JIMMY. (*To JOHN*) Give me your lease.

HIGGINS. (*Finds a dirty, much-folded "FOR RENT" sign in his left pocket; walks to window with it; hangs up the sign so that it faces the street; laughs. NOTE: Be sure to let audience see the printing—For Rent—before hanging the sign in window*) Te he he he! (*Meantime, JOHN crosses to safe; gets lease; gives it to JIMMY, who scans it carefully. HIGGINS turns to JOHN*) I'll give you

three days to get out of here and until to-night to pay me what's coming to me—or I'll get the Constable and—— (*Sees JIMMY reading lease; pause; then begins:*) There are other factories waiting for you and Mahogany to get out of my building. You bet, the next party to move in here pays DOUBLE what you're paying now. Yes siree! (*His hand strikes table with a bang*)

JIMMY. (*Offers him a cigar*) Have a cigar?

HIGGINS. (*Blustery*) Don't you think I've got the money to buy my own cigars if I want them? Or do I look like a patient in a charity ward, eh? (*HIGGINS stands, eyeing the cigar; JIMMY produces another; holds out both to HIGGINS*)

JIMMY. Have some more. These are my favorite brand.

HIGGINS. (*Grabs cigars; puts them in his pocket; to JOHN*) Who's he?

JOHN. He is——

JIMMY. (*Smiles; bows, quickly*) Your obedient servant, at all times, Mr. Higgins. (*Assumes a very businesslike attitude*) What!! A hundred dollars per month for THIS!!!! (*As his eyes rove about the room, disdainfully. Then he lowers them and continues reading lease*)

HIGGINS. (*Crosses to L.*) I'm giving this loft away. I could have rented it THREE times yesterday—and at my own price. (*Pounds fist on table*)

JIMMY. (*Smiles in a complimentary spirit*) Well, you're a wonder!

HIGGINS. (*Taken in by the flattery; chuckles gleefully*) What's that?

JIMMY. As an A No. I Bluffer, you're magnificent! (*Seriously*) Your building's not worth much, but you're too smart to let others know it. To begin with, it's not fireproof. The loft's unsani-

tary. There's not enough light to the cubic foot. There should be three windows on that side—— (*Points to R.*) You have only one fire-escape and that's so out of style, it hasn't the resistance of a piece of junk from Noah's Ark.

HIGGINS. Look here, you young——

JIMMY. Don't get blasphemous. I stood at seven this morning, flirting with that escape. You needn't speak in its defense. I know its every secret. It celebrated its 20th birthday ten years ago.

HIGGINS. What?

JIMMY. Yes, sir, for real comedy, it has anything I've ever seen beaten to a frazzle. And for protection, don't let it fool you. It's a warning. "Don't cross the threshold; there's danger within!" Come on! Get up to date, Mr. Higgins! Nowadays, it's Safety First! (*HIGGINS becomes frightened at this truth. JIMMY senses HIGGINS's fear and he speaks in tones loud and significant*) J. T.! One hundred dollars a month for this rotten hole is thievery—thievery! (*Sitting at JOHN's desk with an air of superiority*) Won't you sit down, Mr. Higgins? Have another cigar? (*HIGGINS stands facing JIMMY*) Tell me about the crops! Think the corn's going to be as sweet this year as it was last?

HIGGINS. (*Sharply*) I came to talk business.

JIMMY. A dash of sociability mixed in makes life a jolly gamble!

HIGGINS. (*Irritably*) I don't believe in gambling.

JIMMY. Believe in it or not, the minute a man starts out to make a living, he's gambling on the strength of his ability against the faith he has in himself! (*HIGGINS makes a wry face; realizes JIMMY is clever. JIMMY rises; crosses to R. where JOHN is standing, leaning on KITTY's desk; JIMMY*

speaks to JOHN in an undertone; then turns to HIGGINS with great ceremony. Comedy effect here) Mr. Landlord, you've relieved us of much embarrassment. We've been wondering just how to go about telling you we are going to move. This loft is—ah—TOO SMALL!

(KITTY enters back; crosses to her desk)

HIGGINS. Say, who in the Devil are you?

JIMMY. Why, didn't you know that J. T. was to have a General Manager?

HIGGINS. *(Laughs incredulously)* Manager?

JIMMY. There's nothing funny about that. Rockefeller has one. J. P. Morgan had one.

HIGGINS. Manager of WHAT?

JIMMY. *(Sweetly)* The OTHER FACTORY!

HIGGINS. What other factory?

JIMMY. *(Feigns surprise)* J. T., you don't mean to tell me the people in this town don't know you own another factory? *(To HIGGINS, lightly)* Remember the tallest building in Newark? It's the Cinderella Building, with an American flag waving from it. *(Turns to JOHN, seriously)* Is it one American flag or TWO we have waving from our tower?

HIGGINS. Rubbish!

JIMMY. *(Holds lease in front of HIGGIN's eyes)* This lease says if rent is not paid by the fifteenth of succeeding month, the lessor has the privilege of re-renting loft as lease becomes null and void. Our lease had three years yet to run—and WE WANTED TO BREAK IT—and we have broken it—and we're so happy—so happy—that if there was a brass band in the village, we'd hire it to play popular tunes while we move from this fire-trap. *(HIGGINS stands aghast. JIMMY turns to KITTY)*

Miss Kitty, will you make out a check for Mr. Higgins, please? (HIGGINS turns to JOHN, who stands smiling. KITTY at desk. JOHN pretends to be looking over a ledger, as though very occupied)

HIGGINS. Well, I'll be——

JIMMY. (To HIGGINS, as he points to JOHN) Isn't J. T. handsome when he smiles like that? (HIGGINS crosses to the door) What's your hurry? Mahogany won't run away. (JIMMY pretends to write out something)

HIGGINS. How did you know I was going to Mahogany's?

JIMMY. (Laughs; shows HIGGINS the joke is on him) I didn't. You just told me!

HIGGINS. (Crosses to JIMMY) Guess you'll be telling me Mr. Mahogany'll be moving into YOUR building.

JIMMY. No. You spared me that.

HIGGINS. I saw him just before coming up here. He's going to renew his lease.

JIMMY. What should he say—in order not to inflict you further? You are suffering enough.

HIGGINS. How do you know?

JIMMY. From the way you're acting. (KITTY crosses to C. Gives check to JIMMY, who is sitting at JOHN's desk)

HIGGINS. What's the proposition you made Mahogany?

JIMMY. Mahogany wouldn't last two months downstairs—if we were not up here. WE make this location desirable.

HIGGINS. The Mahogany Company is ten times larger than this concern. (Looks around room. Crosses to back)

JIMMY. (Taps small bell which is on desk. Bell sounds like a telephone ringing. JIMMY takes up the receiver of real telephone; pretends to be talk-

ing to someone at the other end. This is done with great rapidity) Hello. . . . Yes. . . . Long distance? . . . Yes. I'll be in my office all day. (*Hangs up receiver; turns to KITTY, who is now back at her desk*) The freight agent of the New York Central wants to speak to me at noon. Make a note of that, Miss Kitty, so I DON'T FORGET. (*HIGGINS crosses to L.; inspects the stock on shelves*) Your check, Mr. Higgins! (*HIGGINS crosses to C.; about to take check. JIMMY looks at check for second; pulls it away from HIGGINS*) Miss Kitty, you're getting careless. You spelled the word "hundred" wrong. Re-write the check. (*JIMMY tears up check as HIGGINS stands with outstretched hand*) Before you do that, Miss Kitty, tell Bobby to come in here. He's entirely too slow. We have 236 orders to get out of here to-day. (*KITTY exits back. JOHN glances over ledger, supposedly working; in reality, he is listening to JIMMY's every word. HIGGINS turns to L. JIMMY taps bell; takes up receiver; pretends to be talking to someone at the other end*) Hello. . . . Yes. . . . (*BOBBY enters back; looks surprised; JOHN motions to BOBBY that all is O. K. JIMMY to BOBBY*) Call Miss Kitty. (*BOBBY exits back, hurriedly. JIMMY, into phone*) . . . Hold the wire. (*To JOHN*) Wanamaker's at the other end. (*KITTY enters back, hurriedly*) Miss Kitty, Wanamaker's want to give us a rush order. (*KITTY sits at phone. JIMMY winks at her knowingly*)

KITTY. Yes. (*She pretends to be taking order. HIGGINS crosses to back. JIMMY stops him. The scene has now changed to one of much activity*)

JIMMY. No admittance there, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS. This is MY building.

JIMMY. And this is OUR factory. And you can't rummage through our business. Furthermore, you can have this loft to-night. We'll move to our

own building—and Mahogany will move, too. I'll give him his rent free. I'll do more than that. We have six stories over there. I'll get all the dinky little factories to move with us. I'll show you who's the largest factory around here. (KITTY *hands the supposed order to JIMMY*)

KITTY. (*Into phone*) Thank you. (*Hangs up receiver*)

JIMMY. (*Looks at order; smiles*) Isn't that a pretty order? Four hundred dollars profit. Made just like that. (*Snaps his fingers*)

BOBBY. (*Enters back; to JIMMY*) What do you want me to do?

JIMMY. In the best way you know how, make a sign, reading "NO ADMITTANCE. THIS MEANS YOU." Hang it over that door. (*Points to door at back*) And get a wiggle on yourself. (HIGGINS *stands utterly confused. JIMMY again taps bell and calls himself up; into phone*) No, the Manager is not in. (*Hangs up receiver*) Your check will be ready in a moment, Mr. Higgins. (*To KITTY*) Miss Kitty, take a dictation. (KITTY *sits at typewriter table; takes up small pad; writes*) "J. P. Morgan & Co., Gentlemen: Enclosed find check No. 555666 for \$23,000. This cancels note of two months ago at 4 per cent. Yours very truly." (*With significance*) Make out check for interest separately.

HIGGINS. (*To himself*) \$23,000!!!! (*Turns to JIMMY*) I'll see you later.

JIMMY. Good day and Merry Christmas—though it's eight months off! (HIGGINS *stands laughing*) Mr. Higgins, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (HIGGINS *exits L. JIMMY rises; crosses to JOHN at R. It has become clearer outside*) How do you like the system? Orders from Wanamaker's. Letter to Morgan. Telephone

message from the New York Central? Ha, ha, ha!
(Laughs)

JOHN. (*At R. of desk; with gravity*) All he need do is—investigate—and——

(WARN CURTAIN)

JIMMY. (*Buoyantly*) He'll be so busy telling everyone he meets about that new factory of ours, he will not have the time.

(LIGHTS UP)

JOHN. And the result?

JIMMY. (*Serio-comically*) I'm going to continue playing this factory is just what you once dreamed it would be. And I'm going to play it so well all the people in this burg will be thinking we're larger than your wildest dreams could picture—if you will permit me! (*Pause. JOHN crosses to c., thoughtfully*) Well, it's a dead cinch you can't lose MUCH. Let me, will you? (*Pause, as JOHN tries to decide*)

JOHN. I know you can't make matters MUCH WORSE—and I like you, my boy. You stay! (*JOHN clasps JIMMY's hands with sincere cordiality*)

JIMMY. Good! I stay! (*The sun floods in from window at R.*)

KITTY. (*Cries out exultantly*) The sun—the sun——

JIMMY. (*In a tone that proves he is a disciple of right thinking*) Ah— isn't the world beautiful when the sun SMILES LIKE THAT! (*JOHN, KITTY and JIMMY all face down R., the sun streaming in upon them, as THE CURTAIN QUICKLY FALLS*)

ACT II

SCENE and situation remain unchanged when curtain rises.

JOHN. (*Looks at JIMMY with awe*) This factory has always been run on honest principles. I shouldn't want it to be run any other way. My motto is "Honesty is the best policy!"

JIMMY. Yes, but haven't you been suffering from an overdose?

JOHN. Overdose?

JIMMY. (*Puts his arm around JOHN*) Apples are healthy but eat twenty—and what will happen? You'll need a physician. So does this factory.

JOHN. But my creditors?

JIMMY. That's the trouble—your creditors! You're looking at this business from their point of view. (*Strong*) How far do you think George Washington would have gotten, had he stood on his side of the Delaware, thinking how comfortable the Hessians were—on the other side?

JOHN. (*Somewhat convinced*) You talk as though you mean what you're saying.

JIMMY. Mean it? I can PROVE IT.

JOHN. How?

JIMMY. To begin with, we're going to make everyone believe you're IT—I'm IT—this factory's IT—and no other company can manufacture up to our standard. We're going to boost this business up to the moon. Sounds bully, doesn't it?

JOHN. Yes, but can you do it?

JIMMY. ANY man can do ANY thing if he thinks the RIGHT WAY!

JOHN. You know nothing about this business.

JIMMY. All I need is a little common sense, a dash of shrewdness and a good voice, because I'm going to sing to everyone who comes my way the prettiest little tune you ever heard—"S-U-C-C-E-S-S—period." (*Sings the s-u-c—etc. to the tune of "do-re-mi-fa-so-la-se-do."* *Laughs*)

JOHN. Now you're treating this as a joke.

JIMMY. Because I'm smiling? I'm not like the raspberry eater who's so busy looking for the BUG he forgets the taste of the BERRY.

JOHN. If I knew who you are——

JIMMY. If you can't trust me, I don't want to stay. If you can, don't make me talk. I must save my arguing apparatus or I'll have laryngitis before the day's over.

JOHN. I said, my boy, you stay!

JIMMY. Good! Then I appoint myself your General Manager—and Physician. As Manager, I bid you good-day. As Physician, I advise a twenty-minute walk. You need fresh air in your lungs and head. Now, go down your main street. Smile at every one of your competitors. Remember, when a man's down and out and he smiles, he's suggesting to the other man that he's happy—and a man's never really happy unless he's successful. So think—THINK SUCCESS—SUCCESS—and smile—SMILE—SMILE! (*JOHN smiles gratefully*) Keep it up. You're just handsome when you smile like that! (*JOHN picks up his hat; smiles; exits L. JIMMY watches JOHN out of room; then, to KITTY*) There goes a man who's been so busy worrying he's starved his soul. (*KITTY looks up at JIMMY; smiles; JIMMY smiles back. A gentle flirtation. JIMMY crosses to KITTY's desk*) We must put a

big thing over—you and I! (*They look into each other's eyes, the love-light dawning, as BOBBY enters back and begins to tack up the "NO ADMITTANCE: THIS MEANS YOU" sign on door at back*)

BOBBY. Gee, I can't print.

JIMMY. (*Crosses to desk; about to go to work*) You're doing fine.

BOBBY. You haven't seen those signs I'm making.

JIMMY. (*Strong, as he fumbles with papers on desk*) They're GREAT!

BOBBY. (*Puzzled*) Gee, don't I wish I could feel like you do! (*BOBBY stands regarding JIMMY with a silent and worshipful admiration*)

JIMMY. You have brains. Perhaps, one of these days, you'll be someone big—like Advertising Manager for the Cinderella Company. Hold the thought, Bobby—that you're going to be a big man!

BOBBY. (*His breath almost taken away*) You're wonderful when you TALK LIKE THAT.

JIMMY. And you'll be wonderful when you THINK LIKE THAT. Now run along and get me five desks, five chairs—and anything that will help make this place look alive. (*BOBBY stands staring at JIMMY*) Now hustle along and work as though the world's coming to an end to-night and you have a certain amount to finish. (*BOBBY exits back, hurriedly. KITTY turns around slowly; sort of "peeps" to see what JIMMY is doing. JIMMY takes some money from his pocket; counts it; puts it on desk, when he discovers KITTY watching him*) \$4.37—and that's all I have. (*Smiles*)

KITTY. No? Really?

JIMMY. The place looks like it's sick. (*Glancing around room*)

KITTY. It is—financially.

JIMMY. Then we must give first aid to the injured. We must create a good impression.

(ARNOLD enters L. KITTY comes from her chair)

KITTY. Mr. Arnold, have you met our new—Manager?

ARNOLD. (*Surprised; looks at JIMMY, quizzically*) Manager?

JIMMY. (*Crosses to L.; extends his hand; smiles*) How do you do? The pleasure's all mine. (ARNOLD is very unresponsive. Intuitively, he feels that JIMMY is a great power. He stands, regarding JIMMY with mingled fear and wonder)

KITTY. Mr. Arnold is Mr. John's nephew.

JIMMY. Delighted to know that. I'm fond of your uncle. (*He gives ARNOLD's hand a squeeze which causes ARNOLD to wince*) I wish I were not so busy. I'd like to chat with you. But just now there's much to be done around here. (*Bows graciously—takes papers from desk. Business of getting down to work*) I'll see you again, Mr. Arnold.

ARNOLD. My name is Baker.

JIMMY. A thousand pardons, Mr. Baker. (JIMMY notices that ARNOLD has not smiled once. ARNOLD moves toward back, wondering what JIMMY's presence in the factory means. ARNOLD scowls. JIMMY rises; sees ARNOLD's long-drawn face. JIMMY smiles) Ah, Mr. Baker, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (JIMMY laughs; exits back)

ARNOLD. (*Quickly*) What does this mean? A new manager? (KITTY crosses to her desk; goes to work) Uncle told me he was going to close this factory.

KITTY. It looked for a while as though someone

else were going to close this factory. But that's changed now and we intend to continue.

ARNOLD. When did—(*Points to door at back through which JIMMY exited*)—"he" come?

KITTY. A little while ago.

ARNOLD. From where?

KITTY. I am not sure—but I think—from somewhere near—Heaven! (*Smiles at ARNOLD mischievously*)

ARNOLD. (*Crosses to R.; stands close beside her*) You seem to have changed. I haven't heard you joke for a long time.

KITTY. I—I think I never was more serious.

ARNOLD. Come down to earth, Kitty—Miss Kitty. Tell me, who is this stranger?

KITTY. (*With much sentiment*) A gentleman—who has come to put us all on the right road!

ARNOLD. (*Pauses; surprised at what appears to be a romantic trend in KITTY's manner*) What book have you been reading lately?

KITTY. (*Resenting the remark*) Please! You will do me a great favor by allowing me to finish what I am just beginning—

ARNOLD. And that is?

KITTY. Trying to think the best of everyone. (*She faces him squarely*)

ARNOLD. Now you're talking. Just at the psychological moment. I want you to think the best of me. (*She turns toward her ledger; he leans toward her*) I like you. The first day I saw you—about fourteen years ago, I was attracted. You were about six and I was eight. Remember, your hands were sticky with caramels—and—well, I liked you, caramels and all!

KITTY. Please, Mr. Arnold, I'm busy—and—

ARNOLD. (*Closes her ledger; tries to take her hands in his; she draws them away*) Now, you

never can tell what this attraction may lead to. I'm hoping marriage, ultimately. I want you to look at me—think of me—in the light of a prospective husband! (*Very seriously*)

KITTY. I've never given you any encouragement, Mr. Arnold.

ARNOLD. Don't let that worry you.

KITTY. But you don't understand—I—I don't know exactly how to explain without hurting you—but you don't appeal to me.

ARNOLD. I won't ask you to marry me for quite a few years. In the meantime, don't let any other man come between us. (*With quiet persistency*)

KITTY. Mr. Arnold, I'm afraid I must tell you—that now or five years from now, my opinion of you will be the same.

ARNOLD. Then we can be married and you can fall in love after the ceremony. We needn't have ALL the excitement at once.

KITTY. (*Disgusted*) Oh——

ARNOLD. (*As he rolls a cigarette in his supercilious and superficial attitude. Crosses to L. of C. desk*) I know I'm not a millionaire, but I'm on the road to be one. I'm looking for a \$3,000 per year job.

KITTY. Don't you think you're wasting time, now?

ARNOLD. A man never wastes his time telling the girl he loves—— (*Sincerely*) Kit, you'll look swell in purple.

KITTY. (*As she writes in her ledger*) I hate purple.

ARNOLD. Royalty wears it.

KITTY. So do persons in second mourning.
(JIMMY enters back, unobserved by either KITTY or ARNOLD; he is about to walk down C. when—)

ARNOLD. I'll give you a limousine—— (JIMMY stops; looks at ARNOLD; listens)

KITTY. When I marry—(*Crosses to desk with letter*)—it will be for HOW MUCH I CAN GIVE A MAN—not for how much HE CAN GIVE ME. I won't be any man's doll to decorate. I won't use his superfluous cash to build up department stores. If there's any building up to be done, I'll begin at home—TO BUILD A FUTURE. It's a help-mate I'll be to a man—or nothing! (JIMMY smiles contentedly)

ARNOLD. Some talk! Don't spill that on the gentleman from Heaven. Ha! Ha! He might like it. Good-bye, Kit——

KITTY. Good-bye—and I trust you'll not speak of this again——

ARNOLD. Oh, I'll speak of it again—if I don't lose my voice. (ARNOLD exits back. JIMMY walks to desk at c.; sits)

(BOBBY enters back, carrying small table, which he places up R.)

BOBBY. Will this do for a desk, Mr. Jimmy? It's the best thing I can find around here. And I've got five of these.

JIMMY. Good! Bring them in and be spry. Miss Kitty, your desk should be very close to mine. (BOBBY rushes out at back. KITTY turns around; smiles at JIMMY. He smiles back. Keeping his eyes upon her, he opens all the desk drawers; takes out papers; places most of them on desk; scatters some blotters on floor; business of making the desk appear as though the person using it is a very busy and influential personage. JIMMY rises; crosses to R.; places KITTY's desk close beside desk at c., as BOBBY enters back with small table. JIMMY becomes very businesslike. To KITTY) Will you go

down to Mahogany's and call up five of the prettiest girls you know? Tell them to come here, prepared to work, but to dress attractively. Be sure old man Mahogany hears every word you say. If he's listening, pay the girls \$15 per week. If he's not listening, pay them eleven. (*KITTY exits L. BOBBY has by this time brought in five tables. He and JIMMY place three of them to the right of desk in c., at back, and two of them to the left. JIMMY takes dusting brush from under shipping table. Begins to dust boxes in stock room up L. BOBBY begins to clean up. Pause as they work*) Bobby, bring me the signs you have made. (*JIMMY picks up an old picture of George Washington; dusts it reverently; tacks it on wall. BOBBY crosses to back*)

BOBBY. Sir?

JIMMY. You have a brain, Bobby. Use it. (*Smiles at BOBBY*)

BOBBY. I get you. (*He exits, whistling "The Star Spangled Banner."*) JIMMY jumps on ladder up L. as MISS ROGERS enters L., very much out of breath. She crosses to c.; sees JIMMY on ladder)

MISS ROGERS. I didn't know you were still here. (*Appears delighted to see him*)

JIMMY. Ah—welcome to our factory! (*Delicately*) I've been thinking of you.

MISS ROGERS. (*Kittenish; as she sits R.*) And I of you! I've been looking for a position ever since I left here—and I can't find one!

JIMMY. (*Coming down from ladder*) What seems to be the trouble? (*Continues making room more attractive by cleaning it up*)

MISS ROGERS. My parents—mostly! If I'd had anything to say before I was born, I'd have picked out a father who wasn't a politician. I'd have looked out for less notoriety in the family—and more MONEY!

JIMMY. (*Laughs*) Don't let positions worry you any more. Mr. Trellavan has made me his manager—(*MISS ROGERS rises, aghast*)—and as such, I shall exert my good judgment in the behalf of so charming a lady as Miss Rogers. She shall rise to the dignified position of forelady of one of the largest factories in the country!

MISS ROGERS. Well! That sounds good to me. I'll take a chance! (*She is about to go to work when JIMMY stops her*)

JIMMY. Before you go to work, I'd like you to go across the street and buy a rug, not too large. I want a blind for that window—(*Points to R.*)—a gross of pens, twenty bottles of ink, twenty-five ledgers—big ones. And letter files, thirty of them—and ink wells—and a gross of lead pencils, some scratch pads AND some blank books—and charge everything to the factory. Oh, yes, I want a large roll of wrapping paper—the largest you can find. I don't care where you get it—but BRING IT RIGHT UP. Bring everything RIGHT UP! (*MISS ROGERS looks amazed. JIMMY goes back to stock room, where he continues dusting*) And remember, Miss Rogers, I'm in a hurry for them.

MISS ROGERS. Forelady? It looks like I'm to be an express wagon. (*Smiles; looks at JIMMY working*) Oh, well, express wagons are SO useful! (*All this has been said half to herself. She exits L., as KITTY enters L. KITTY notices MISS ROGERS smiling; looks after her; then turns to JIMMY*)

KITTY. Your stenographers will be here immediately.

(*BOBBY enters back with some bunting; puts it on table; continues wrapping packages*)

JIMMY. How much?

KITTY. Twenty dollars a week. Both MR. and MRS. Mahogany were listening.

JIMMY. It's all right. Mahogany'll be advertising it before long that our girls are the best paid in the town.

BOBBY. This office is beginning to look like something. (JIMMY *laughs*) I only hope Mr. John won't have heart failure before he comes in.

JIMMY. He'll have a change of scenery, eh, Bobby?

BOBBY. He'll think the dead have risen!

JIMMY. (*Puts book on each desk*) Bobby, why do you always talk about dead things?

BOBBY. Because they're the only things you can talk about—without getting into trouble. (*He packs and wraps up packages*) Cy Wetherby talked about Jim Simpkin's wife's beauty. Jim smashed Cy's nose. Cy smashed Jim's skull. Jim died and Cy's in the State Prison now. Guess the next time he talks about any woman, it'll be about that little Indian girl in front of Peter's cigar stand. She's MADE OF WOOD!

KITTY. (*To JIMMY, as they straighten up the office*) Talking is Bobby's failing.

JIMMY. (*With a sweet smile*) We are all so very human! (KITTY *crosses to her desk; takes a cleaning rag from it; begins to wipe the desk. For a second, JIMMY watches KITTY; wishes to be alone with her; wonders how he can get rid of BOBBY*) Oh, Bobby, you better see that Miss Rogers gets back safely. She's buying out the department store across the street. (BOBBY *changes his old coat for the better one; smiles to himself, as he realizes that JIMMY is becoming infatuated with KITTY. BOBBY exits L. JIMMY crosses to where KITTY is standing, rubbing her desk*) May I help?

KITTY. With pleasure. (JIMMY *takes other end*

of rag; rubs desk vigorously; KITTY also rubs her desk; and as they rub, they look not at what they are rubbing, but at each other. Both smile)

JIMMY. Miss Kitty, you won't mind working for me, will you? *(He pulls her toward him by gradually shortening the rag)*

KITTY. I'm very happy—because you have come here.

JIMMY. That sounds like music to a—suffering soul.

KITTY. *(Quietly, but somewhat surprised)* You don't look ill.

JIMMY. *(Sighs romantically)* Ah, but it's getting worse every minute.

KITTY. *(Seriously, as she begins to rub desk, absent-mindedly)* Indigestion? *(She gradually lengthens rag and draws away from him)*

JIMMY. No—I don't seem to have the symptoms. *(Smiles at her lack of understanding)*

KITTY. *(Innocently)* Toothache?

JIMMY. No!

KITTY. Neuralgia?

JIMMY. *(Points to his forehead; then to his heart; sadly)* It's here—and something around here.

KITTY. Do you think it's serious?

JIMMY. It wouldn't be worth while if it weren't. *(Looks at her, sweetly)* Seriousness is the first step toward attainment! *(Pause; she looks at him wonderingly and—awed!)*

KITTY. *(With a far-away ring in her voice)* I'm so sorry. One suffers terribly when any pain comes on so suddenly. *(She is somewhat embarrassed)* We—we're forgetting our work.

JIMMY. It is so sweet to forget, at times.

KITTY. *(Confused and yet delighted; takes rag; puts it in her desk)* Isn't it strange how much fun

one can get out of so small a thing as a—cleaning rag! (*For the first time, she hears the faint strains, as if out of the distance, of Mendelssohn's "The Spring Song." She stands, quietly listening*) What's that? (JIMMY smiles; the music dies away. *There is a rap on door at left. Two men enter, carrying a stack of leathers. JIMMY directs them to put the skins on the floor; they do so; they exit L. JIMMY points to the leathers, laughingly*) This is a very big game you're playing. I hope it will succeed.

JIMMY. It will succeed.

KITTY. It seems almost impossible to make something out of nothing.

JIMMY. Nothing is impossible to the man WHO TRIES!

KITTY. But—you seem so CERTAIN.

JIMMY. RIGHT THINKING is the MOTHER of ACHIEVEMENT. It produces big results.

KITTY. What if it shouldn't end as——

JIMMY. (*Interrupts*) Sh! Isn't that the talk of the Quitter?

KITTY. (*Worriedly*) But——

JIMMY. (*With faith and hope*) Henry Ward Beecher said, "In the economy of God's providence, every right and well-organized business is a beneficence, not a selfishness."

KITTY. You have an honest twinkle in your eye, a note of sincerity in your voice. (*Pause*) And—I like you.

JIMMY. To how many men have you told THAT?

KITTY. To no one—but you!

(MISS ROGERS enters L., accompanied by BOBBY. *Both are loaded down with what JIMMY sent MISS ROGERS for—books, a rug, a blind, etc.*)

MISS ROGERS *is a bit dilapidated looking. JIMMY is too occupied to notice. KITTY, busy at desk at R. MISS ROGERS crosses to C., letting one thing fall on table, another on chair, etc.)*

MISS ROGERS. *(In a hard tone)* If a compliment hadn't been paid me by one of our leading citizens, I'd say a few things that would set the air in motion. *(JIMMY relieves BOBBY of his load; then smiles at MISS ROGERS. BOBBY exits back. MISS ROGERS' tone softens when JIMMY smiles at her)* But it's awful when a woman has a heart that forgives—and when I look at you—*(strangely, as though she cannot explain the emotions that JIMMY arouses within her)*—I must forgive! *(Then, a bit harder)* Some compliment!

JIMMY. May I relieve you of it? *(He and KITTY use the articles to make the office appear more businesslike and more attractive)*

MISS ROGERS. I passed our Postmaster. He was loaded down with mail. I—with these things—— *(Points to things around room)* He said I'm one of the few women who, if married, wouldn't be human excess baggage. *(Into KITTY's ear)* We're going to the Movies to-night! *(Crosses to R.; goes to mirror. Primps up)* Am I to go back to my old position?

JIMMY. Yes—unless the Postmaster gives you ANOTHER! *(JIMMY and KITTY have, by this time, put rug on floor; scattered ledgers and ink bottles on desks. JIMMY takes cobwebs from ceiling and with a broom scatters them on the rug in an effort to make rug appear somewhat time-worn. Continue business of making rug appear old. MISS ROGERS turns to exit back as BOBBY enters back with sign, which he tacks on wall, thus blocking MISS ROGERS' exit. She waits; stiffens up. When*

BOBBY is finished, he crosses to L. The sign can now be seen by MISS ROGERS and audience. MISS ROGERS reads aloud)

MISS ROGERS. "He who seldom does more than his salary calls for has LITTLE salary to call for." (Shoots angry glance at BOBBY, who stands convulsed with laughter) Well!!!! (MISS ROGERS throws her head back; exits back with the strut of an angry peacock. The office now presents an entirely different appearance)

JIMMY. Bobby, put the blind at the window. (BOBBY crosses to window at R.; adjusts the blind. Five young ladies enter L.)

KITTY. My friends.

JIMMY. I welcome you.

(READY PHONE)

KITTY. (Introduces them; each bows as her name is spoken) Miss Grayson, Miss Long, Miss Brown, Miss Fairchild, Miss Hoyt.

JIMMY. (Shakes hands with each girl) Ah, young ladies, you have transformed this room into a garden of American Beauties. (Smiles at each one, as he silently beckons each to take a place behind a desk. Each girl wears a plain dress of a bright color; neat garb such as one sees in the average country town) Miss Kitty will advise each of you what to do. And I shall advise Miss Kitty. Now pay strict attention. (Points to girl at first desk; to KITTY) To this young lady, dictate a letter to be sent to five of the largest banking institutions in the country. Say we thank them for offering us a loan of—of \$25,000 at four per cent—but, at the present time, we are not in need of it. (KITTY is seated at R.; writes in shorthand as JIMMY dictates. JIMMY at c. desk points to second girl)

Give this young lady a list of A No. 1 accounts. Dictate to her a letter of thanks for orders received. Make letter one of great courtesy.

KITTY. Yes.

JIMMY. (*Points to third girl*) I want this young lady to look up Chicago and New York accounts. Make a list of them. Better get a Dun or a Bradstreet and use only such concerns as are rated above five hundred thousand. Write letters to them regretting we can't make deliveries—AS WE ARE SO RUSHED—at this time of the year. (*Points to fourth girl*) This young lady will address the envelopes. (*Points to fifth girl*) This young lady will be our telephone department. (*Business with the bell*) Instruct her how to use MY TELEPHONE INTELLIGENTLY. (*Telephone rings. KITTY answers it*)

KITTY. Cinderella Factory. . . . Who? . . . Just a moment. (*Turns to JIMMY in distress*) Mr. Bartlett. He's our largest creditor.

JIMMY. We'll fix him. (*To first girl*) You, Peach Blossom, answer the phone and say, "Cinderella Factory. Department A."

FIRST GIRL. (*Crosses to phone; takes up receiver. KITTY stands by desk*) Cinderella Factory. . . . Department A. . . . What?

JIMMY. (*To SECOND GIRL*) You're Department B.

FIRST GIRL. (*At phone*) Just a moment. . . .

JIMMY. (*To FIRST GIRL*)—Tell him you'll connect him with Department B.

FIRST GIRL. (*Into phone*) The Manager is not in this department. . . . I'll connect you with Department B.

SECOND GIRL. (*Steps to phone; talks into it. FIRST GIRL goes back to her desk*) Department B. . . . Yes. . . .

JIMMY. (*To THIRD GIRL*) You're Department C. (*To SECOND GIRL at phone*) Connect him with Department C.

THIRD GIRL. (*Takes up receiver; SECOND GIRL back to her desk*) Department C.

JIMMY. (*To THIRD GIRL at phone*) Against orders to receive messages.

THIRD GIRL AT PHONE. What? Can't take your message . . . against orders . . . Department B. didn't know that. . . What? . . . What floor am I on?

JIMMY. (*To THIRD GIRL at phone*) Make it sixth.

THIRD GIRL AT PHONE. Sixth floor. . . .

JIMMY. (*To FOURTH GIRL*) You're the Central in the Annex.

THIRD GIRL AT PHONE. I'll connect you. . . .

FOURTH GIRL AT PHONE. (*THIRD GIRL goes back to her desk*) Hello. . . . Who do you want? . . . This is the Central in the Annex. . . . Yes, sir, this is the Cinderella Factory.

JIMMY. (*Calls to FOURTH GIRL*) ONE of them.

FOURTH GIRL AT PHONE. One of them. . . . I'll connect you.

JIMMY. (*To FIFTH GIRL*) You're in my private office.

FIFTH GIRL AT PHONE. (*FOURTH GIRL goes back to her desk*) Private office. . . . Who? . . . No, sir. (*JOHN enters L.; sees the girls; registers surprise as he welcomes the change made since he left the office; he stands staring at girls; cannot believe his own eyes*) Mr. Bartlett? . . . No, sir, but our Manager is here.

JIMMY. (*Walks to phone; talks into receiver*) Hello. . . . What? . . . Didn't know Mr. Trellavan had a Manager? . . . One does learn day by day. . . . What? . . . I'll be delighted to see you. . . . Good-

bye. (*Hangs receiver up; JIMMY turns to KITTY*) I'll bet Mr. Bartlett will have some respect for us when he walks in.

JOHN. (*Crosses to JIMMY*) My boy—I—I can't believe it. It's just like my dream come true. (*KITTY and GIRLS at back immediately get to work. KITTY instructs girl. JOHN and JIMMY cross to R.*) Over there—five girls—— (*JOHN appears half dazed*)

JIMMY. (*Puts his hands on JOHN's shoulders affectionately*) Tell me, how many of your competitors did you meet, and did you smile each time?

JOHN. One man stopped me and wanted to know if any of my wealthy relatives had died and left me a fortune.

JIMMY. Good! You smiled!

JOHN. I went to the bank. I tried to fix matters. They won't extend the loan and the note is due next week. \$4,000!

JIMMY. You didn't smile. Next week is a long way off.

JOHN. Yes—when you don't owe anything.

JIMMY. Didn't you tell me a little while ago to-night would see the end of the factory?

JOHN. (*Smiles*) I'm a little more optimistic now.

JIMMY. God bless your little smile, J. T. Now listen! Before the end of the week you'll have \$4,000 to your credit.

JOHN. You can't mean that?

JIMMY. Sure. Money's like Optimism! There's plenty around—if you KNOW HOW TO LOOK FOR IT!

JOHN. It sounds good!

JIMMY. Here's something that's going to sound better. Before I get through, everybody in this

town will be begging—BEGGING—to buy stock in this concern. Yes, sir, I'm going to show them we're so big and making so much money, they'll be begging to buy stock—begging!

JOHN. But we're not a corporation.

JIMMY. Then we'll make it one. Everything will come out all right. (JOHN, *too surprised for words, drops into a chair at R.*) Don't worry. Only once I can remember when I was more amused. That was in China at a Joss House. I led in *PRAYER*!

JOHN. Yes—but what are you going to do now?

JIMMY. When your creditors appear, presto, the tents are raised and the scene changes to one of circus activity. (*Laughs; crosses to back; sees that KITTY is instructing girls correctly, when HIGGINS enters L. JIMMY immediately acts as though he is head over heels in work. JOHN rises. GIRLS appear to work rapidly*) J. T., what about that cablegram from London? (*Scatters papers on desk, making them fly all over*) Where did I—put it? Where did I—oh, yes—— (*Looks up; sees HIGGINS standing in doorway*) Ah, Mr. Higgins. Be seated. I'll be with you in a moment. I have 20,000 circular letters to get out to-day and—have a cigar. (*HIGGINS crosses to c. JIMMY offers him cigar*)

HIGGINS. (*Smiles; accepts cigar*) Thank you. Te he he he! (*Looks around room; then, at JIMMY with a wink; smiles broadly*)

JIMMY. Mr. Higgins, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*HIGGINS is flattered. JIMMY walks to desk, at c.*) You came to see about our moving to-night——

HIGGINS. Looks like you're primped up here to to stay.

JIMMY. Oh, no. I just had to bring our office force—from back there. (*Points to back*) Now

that we're about to go, we don't mind letting people see how BIG we are!

HIGGINS. I see!

JIMMY. Seeing is believing, isn't it, Mr. Higgins. (*Slyly*)

HIGGINS. Yes, sir. That's what they say. (*JOHN exits back*)

JIMMY. (*As he pretends to work*) Um—hum!

HIGGINS. I suppose you're going to put some money in this concern.

JIMMY. (*Looks at his desk; business with the money he placed there*) Yes, sir. I've been thinking of it.

HIGGINS. Yes. I suppose now you'd put in a—a good BIG SUM!

JIMMY. Mr. Higgins, I'm going to put into this concern every cent I have in the world.

HIGGINS. Now, about the rent. If you think \$100 a month exorbitant, I'll go down a quarter and make it \$75.

JIMMY. No inducement. (*Absorbed in work; does not look up*)

HIGGINS. I'd like to talk business with you when you have the time.

JIMMY. Can't you call later?

HIGGINS. (*Crosses to L.*) Old J. T. is going around smiling. No one's seen him smile in years.

JIMMY. You've been looking the WRONG WAY. Better be careful or some one will say the same of you.

HIGGINS. (*With a wry face*) I'll call again. (*JIMMY smiles at him; HIGGINS frowns back. JIMMY keeps on smiling until HIGGINS breaks into a smile*)

JIMMY. Ah, Mr. Higgins, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*HIGGINS exits L.*) The wine of our success has gone to his head. Before

I'm through with him, he'll be intoxicated. (*Phone rings. KITTY answers*)

KITTY. Hello. . . . Oh, how are you, Miss Phyllis? . . . Yes, he's here. I'll tell him at once. . . . He's here now. (*As JOHN enters back with BOBBY*) It's Miss Phyllis.

JOHN. (*At phone*) Hello, Phyllis dear. . . . You don't say . . . that was exciting. . . . Yes, yes, dear, I'll be right over. . . . And smile, dear—keep smiling. (*Hangs up receiver*) Phyllis was on the train that was held up last night. Poor child, she was terribly frightened. I won't be gone long. (*Exits back. JIMMY looks at KITTY, smilingly*)

BOBBY. There's a funny thing about those robbers. Two of them have been heard of—way back in the North Woods. But no one seems to have seen the third one again.

KITTY. They'll be sure to find him. (*Serious expression on JIMMY's face*)

BOBBY. But no one saw his face. He might even be right here—in this town, now!

KITTY. That's absurd.

BOBBY. Well, you can't tell, he might be. Stranger things than that have happened. (*He exits back with a few boxes*)

JIMMY. (*Sits at desk at c.; watches KITTY working at her desk, beside c. desk. KITTY's expression is a very sad one*) Lonely?

KITTY. Yes.

JIMMY. For?

KITTY. My brother!

JIMMY. (*Dejectedly*) I'm lonely, too!

KITTY. For?

JIMMY. You!

KITTY. Impossible! We met only an hour ago.

JIMMY. Love knows no time.

KITTY. You forget, I do not know you.

JIMMY. Cupid's working just the same.

KITTY. —nor where you have come from!

JIMMY. I'm your Cavalier—out of the No-where—into the HERE!

KITTY. —nor why you have come—or what you are!

JIMMY. I am an Optimist! (KITTY *smiles, incredulously*) I can't be much else, 'cause all I have is a heart full of love, and \$4.37—and TWO NECKTIES!

KITTY. You're very brave—and unusual!

JIMMY. You shouldn't find it hard to fall in love with a man who has such good traits. Will you try? (*Leans toward her; looks into her eyes*) Think it over.

KITTY. I can't.

JIMMY. Why? (*The GIRLS at desks are listening, attentively. All lean forward. JIMMY and KITTY perceive this; they get back to work, somewhat embarrassed. JIMMY says to KITTY, tersely*) I said "NO," Miss Blake. The books must be kept just so! (*GIRLS go back to work. JIMMY edges closer to KITTY; whispers*) Will you marry me?

KITTY. (*Whispers back*) No. I can never marry you. May I explain?

JIMMY. Except for excessive taxation, this is a free country.

KITTY. I must be sure my husband is—and has been—a gentleman. I can't tell what you are—just by looking at you.

JIMMY. I'm—taking—a chance—too!

KITTY. It's different.

JIMMY. I believe in love at first sight. My mother met my father at nine one morning. When the cuckoo chirped 12 times, my father had pro-

posed. At nine that night, they had been married three hours. And they lived happily ever after.

KITTY. Your mother must have been a brave woman.

JIMMY. Can't you have faith in me?

KITTY. I—I don't know.

JIMMY. Look at me. Do I look as though I have ever served in a penitentiary?

KITTY. You've taught me one can't always believe what one sees. (*JIMMY makes a wry face*)

JIMMY. (*Out loud*) Miss Blake, your ideas are all wrong. (*MISS ROGERS enters at back*) Miss Rogers, when I give you this signal—(*Bangs telephone down on desk at c.*)—I want you to send all the girls through here. Let them enter that door—(*Points to back*)—and go out that door—(*Points to L.*) Let them walk through the lasting room, then let them walk through here again. I want them to walk through here at least five times.

MISS ROGERS. My mother's aunt used to say——

JIMMY. (*Interrupts*) It's putting a big thing over. Now, we're going to make this factory look large enough for you to think you're getting \$75 per week. Understand?

(*BOBBY enters with packages from back*)

MISS ROGERS. You bet, I understand. (*Exits back*)

JIMMY. Bobby!

BOBBY. On the job, sir!

JIMMY. I want you to go out in the finishing room. Make up half a dozen big shipments. Tag them for different cities all over the world. Give that imagination of yours a free rein and let it perform. Get Andy to help you.

BOBBY. But what shall I——

JIMMY. Think—think—think! Use that organ God intended for a brain. Think and—HUSTLE—and SMILE!

(Messenger boy enters L. with telegram)

BOBBY. On the job, sir. *(Exits back. JIMMY looks at gram; hands it to KITTY; she opens it dejectedly; looks distressed)*

JIMMY. No bad news, I hope?

KITTY. *(Has read gram)* My brother's not coming. *(Puts gram on her desk)* I suppose he's too busy. That's the way it always is when a man goes out and becomes a success. He's apt to think a little less of the folks at home.

JIMMY. *(Encouragingly)* Hope builds up. Worry tears down. Don't you know that?

KITTY. I'm trying to think the best—but he's been gone two years. Billie promised to come home TO-DAY. *(Very disappointedly. She chokes a sob. JIMMY watches her in silence as JOSIAH BARTLETT enters at L. BARTLETT is a man of around fifty, prosperous in appearance; gentlemanly-like in attitude. He stands in doorway, taking in the room at a glance. KITTY goes to her work. JIMMY at desk, at c., as BARTLETT crosses to KITTY)*

BARTLETT. *(Hands KITTY a card)* I want to talk with the Manager. My card!

KITTY. *(Takes card; reads it)* I'll tell him, Mr. Bartlett. *(BARTLETT crosses to R. KITTY whispers to JIMMY)* One of our creditors.

JIMMY. *(Pretends to be busily occupied. BARTLETT turns around. KITTY hands card to JIMMY, who rises; glances at card)* Delighted, Mr. Bartlett—to know you. *(Pretends to suddenly remember something important)* Pardon me for the fraction of a second. I have a letter which I must get

out. I'm very busy—VERY. Won't you be seated, Mr. Bartlett? (*BARTLETT sits at L. of desk at c.*) Take this dictation, Miss Blake. (*KITTY takes dictation while BARTLETT listens*) "Berry, Baldwin & Co., Duane St., New York City. Gentlemen: Telegram explaining situation sent you last ight. Your courtesy in desiring to purchase our factory was indeed appreciated. Your offer of—\$100,000 cash will be taken into consideration when one of the members of our firm, who is at present traveling in the Orient, returns. However, I'm almost at liberty to state, we do not now, or at any future time, care to dispose of our business." Did you get that, Miss Blake?

KITTY. Yes, sir.

JIMMY. Yours most sincerely—— (*Sighs; crosses to L., as MOSES GRAHAM enters L. A small, weazened-up man, middle-aged. He, like BARTLETT, gives the impression of being a successful business man. He carries a cane, and when nervous, taps the floor with it*)

GRAHAM. You here, Josiah? (*JIMMY signals for fake phone ring*)

BARTLETT. (*To JIMMY*) This is Mr. Moses Graham, my cousin—and—— (*Girl at phone taps bell; answers phone by taking receiver from hook*)

GIRL. Hello. . . . Just a moment. . . .

JIMMY (*Shakes hands with GRAHAM*) Delighted, Mr. Graham. (*To GIRL at phone*) If that's the man who wants to sell us several trucks to do our hauling, tell him to ring me up again. Never mind—connect me. (*Goes to phone; pretends to talk into it*) Hello . . . this is the Manager.

BARTLETT. (*To GRAHAM; both down L.*) Looks sort of busy around here.

(*ANDY enters L.*)

JIMMY. (*Into phone*) Yes . . . we need two trucks to do our hauling to the depot—so give me your lowest terms. (*Hangs up; sees ANDY*) Andy, hustle up a little. We have 300 orders to get out to-day. (*ANDY is nearly flabbergasted with surprise. BARTLETT and GRAHAM appear impressed; look at each other wonderingly*)

ANDY. (*As he exits back*) Lord o' Massey!

JIMMY. Just a moment, gentlemen. Have a cigar. (*JIMMY signals to ring bell. Girl at desk taps bell*) Pardon me, gentlemen. (*JIMMY takes up phone*) Hello . . . yes . . . (*Then JIMMY listens to what the men say*)

BARTLETT. We shall see if he gives us our checks.

JIMMY. Miss Blake, an order over the wire. Take it. (*To men, as KITTY takes up receiver*) I'll be with you in a moment. (*Takes letter from desk; then exits back, as HIGGINS enters L.*)

HIGGINS. How do you do, Mr. Bartlett?

BARTLETT. Mr. Graham, Mr. Higgins. (*They acknowledge introduction*)

HIGGINS. Come to look over this concern, eh? Some difference since the new manager moved the whole office force over here.

BARTLETT. I'm rather at a loss to understand this sudden prosperity.

HIGGINS. It seems they've had their real business in Newark, but this young fellow has decided to bring his capital up here.

GRAHAM. Ah, fresh capital, eh? (*Moves up stage*)

BARTLETT. I wonder how much.

HIGGINS. Oh, a large amount, gentlemen. A large amount! This chap told me personally he was going to put every dollar of his in this concern.

BARTLETT. That explains it! (KITTY *pretends to be taking order*. GRAHAM *walks to desk; and happens to notice some letters; glances at them; then deliberately reads them without picking them up*)

GRAHAM. (*Whispers*) Josiah! (*Motions BARTLETT to take a look at the open letter on desk*)

BARTLETT. (*Crosses, casually, to c. desk; notices the letters, as JIMMY peeps in at back*) Um! To Marshall Field & Co., Chicago. R. H. Macy, New York. And Wanamaker's, Philadelphia.

(JIMMY *enters at back*)

JIMMY. Ah, gentlemen, make yourselves at home! (*Office is very busy; all girls appear to be working. JIMMY picks up letter*)

JIMMY. This is wrong. The name is J. P. Morgan, not P. J. (*Exits back hurriedly*)

BARTLETT. (*Who has been snooping around—in undertone to GRAHAM*) He refuses a loan of \$25,000 at 4 per cent.

GRAHAM. Why has he done that, I wonder?

BARTLETT. When a man refuses money, he's either insane—or HE DOESN'T NEED IT!

(JIMMY *enters at back, with shipment of goods, which he places at L.*)

JIMMY. Two of my stock boys are sick to-day. I've got to pitch right in helping to get out the orders. Three hundred to-day! (*Crosses to desk with invoice. Exits back*)

BARTLETT. Moses, I notice they sell only A No. 1 accounts.

(JIMMY *enters back, carrying another shipment, which he places at L., on top of previous shipment*)

GRAHAM. (*To BARTLETT*) Why is the reputation of this concern so poor?

JIMMY. (*About to exit at back; stops*) Do you care what your reputation is?

GRAHAM. Sir?

JIMMY. "Reputation is what others THINK we are. Character is what we REALLY ARE." Our reputation is bad because our competitors make it so. In business, gentlemen, jealousy is a disease and harmful language is the Quack that cures it. (*As BOBBY enters, bringing in as many shipments as he can carry. JIMMY helps him place them at L.*) BARTLETT and GRAHAM silently admire the leathers in the stock room. JIMMY crosses to KITTY; in an aside to her) Make out checks for these gentlemen.

BARTLETT. (*As BOBBY rushes out at back. To GRAHAM*) These are fine skins.

JIMMY. Yes, sir, and not an unpaid bill for them anywhere in THIS office. (*Fake phone bell rings*)

KITTY. Telephone. (*During remainder of scene, ANDY helps BOBBY bring in shipments; places them down L. KITTY crosses to phone; takes up receiver*) Hello. . . . The freight agent of the New York Central wants you.

(*ANDY enters back with shipment*)

JIMMY. (*Into phone; holds imaginary conversation, while BARTLETT and GRAHAM notice tags on shipments at L.*) Hello . . . you, George?

GRAHAM. (*Reads tags*) John Irish, New South Wales, Australia.

BARTLETT. Glory and Co., Cape Town, South Africa. John Bosin, Bellingham, Washington.

JIMMY. Yes, sir, I'll think it over. (*Hangs up receiver. To KITTY, in a casual tone*) The New

York Central will make us a rate if we ship over their railroad exclusively. Make a note of that.

BARTLETT. Why do they do that?

JIMMY. (*Extravagantly comic*) Think of the ADVERTISING the New York Central would get if the Cinderella Factory shipped exclusively over its railroad! (*Exits back, triumphantly. HIGGINS crosses to them, down L.*)

BARTLETT. Looks like they're doing an exporting business. (*To GRAHAM*) And you told me we had better press them for our money.

GRAHAM. (*Himself impressed with the factory's stability*) But they're four months over due——

BARTLETT. A mistake. They forgot our bills—that's what. An oversight. Why, we're little fish to this firm.

HIGGINS. I'm strong for this concern. The new manager told me on the Q. T. he has 20,000 accounts on his books.

BARTLETT AND GRAHAM. (*Together*) Twenty thousand——

HIGGINS. Two hundred and thirty-six to get out to-day. Think o' that. Te he he he!

(*JIMMY enters back with other shipments*)

BARTLETT. (*To GRAHAM*) Three hundred, wasn't it?

HIGGINS. It's a big thing. I can see it grow every minute.

BARTLETT. I had no idea this concern was so large.

JIMMY. Miss Blake, take this dictation. "S. and G. Leather Co. Kindly submit samples of your pinks and browns——"

BARTLETT. (*Eagerly*) I'd like to have that business. I've an apology to make. (*Smiles*)

JIMMY. (*Goes to desk; picks up phone*) Ah, Mr. Bartlett, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*Lets the phone crash on desk, as though it had accidentally fallen from his hand. This is the signal for MISS ROGERS to send in girls. Door at back opens and the girls begin to stream in at back and exit L. They walk in twos and threes. Make noise while walking through. The amount of girls seems to please the men. As action progresses, this satisfaction changes to surprise; then to amazement. The room gradually becomes lighter and by end of scene with BARTLETT and GRAHAM, the sun shines again, throwing its light full across the stage*)

JIMMY. (*To MISS ROGERS*) Don't let any more of your girls go out this way. Send the others down the back way.

BARTLETT. (*Aside to GRAHAM; in tone of disgust with GRAHAM*) Bankruptcy, eh? Look at the force they employ.

HIGGINS. Salesmen in Australia. Think o' that! (*BARTLETT stands thinking. GRAHAM is humbled; believes he has made an error. KITTY watches with satisfaction. The village bell strikes twelve times*)

(*JOHN enters back*)

BARTLETT. Ah, good morning, Mr. Trellavan. (*JOHN is surprised at BARTLETT's affability*) I want to apologize to you for that letter sent you yesterday. It was an error—a stupid stenographer of mine. I'm coming back to-morrow to sell you MORE leathers. Good morning.

JOHN. But——

BARTLETT. It's all right, Mr. Trellavan. I'm not afraid to credit you. I just heard you've taken in

a partner and refused an offer of \$100,000 for this business——

JOHN. (*Ready to topple over from excitement; as though it were all impossible; to JIMMY*) THEY HEARD THAT?????

JIMMY. (*Shrugs his shoulders; in tone that indicates "We may as well make the best of it"*) It couldn't be helped!

BARTLETT. (*Deferentially*) Good morning. I'll see you again to-morrow.

JIMMY. Your checks, gentlemen!

BARTLETT. No hurry—no hurry!

HIGGINS. (*Speaks when BARTLETT does*) I'll drop in later. (GRAHAM, BARTLETT and HIGGINS start for exit L.)

JIMMY. (*Laughing*) Your checks, gentlemen! (*As Curtain starts to descend, JIMMY proffers a check to BARTLETT, who places his hand over JIMMY's, shaking his head—"No! No!" JIMMY, laughing, turns to HIGGINS and GRAHAM, trying to force checks into their hands. HIGGINS and GRAHAM and BARTLETT back up for exit L. HIGGINS refusing his check, BARTLETT patting JIMMY on the shoulder, trying to quiet him, GRAHAM with both hands raised, refusing check with a look of horror on his face, at thought of taking check. JOHN, thunderstruck, in chair at R. JIMMY, following the three men as they exit door L., proffering checks, laughing—they refusing them! As three men exit, they close door, leaving JIMMY standing at same in hearty laughter while JOHN, now on his feet, stands looking at JIMMY with an awed expression*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

Eight months later.

SCENE. *General offices of the Cinderella Corporation. A large room. C., large mahogany table with four chairs on each side of it. Large chair at each end. Small table with typewriter on it, up L. Water stand with tank of water and glass at R. At back, overlooking surrounding buildings, are three large windows. From them can be seen—on furthestmost building—a large electric sign: CINDERELLA, which flashes on and off. Windows, curtained in green. A large "C" on each window blind. Door to R. of windows bear the words "ADVERTISING MANAGER." Door to L. of windows is marked "GENERAL MANAGER." Door down L. bears word "PRESIDENT." Up L. is door which is entrance from outside. Several framed pictures of a large building (presumably the Cinderella Bldg.) on walls at back. Chairs, here and there, around room. On floor, a bright green rug gives a cheerful appearance. It is 7 P.M. in December. Curtain rises. Electric sign flashes on. ANDY turns on lights. He is now dressed in a blue uniform with brass buttons; stands grumbling.*

ANDY. Dis heah night work ain't—

(Enter BOBBY DAY, at R., dressed very prosperously. A decided change from the BOBBY of the first acts. BOBBY walks erect, a typically successful business man)

BOBBY. Andy, why the grouch?

ANDY. Dis heah obertime is mighty hard on an ol' nigger—wid a wife an' son. Why, I ain't seen dat son o' mine——

BOBBY. Ah, but think of the old times—just eight months ago, when there wasn't enough work for half our force. Now look at us—double shifts in the factory, and overtime for all the office staff. Cheer up, Andy, let the sunshine in! (*Exits R.*)

ANDY. Dat sunshine am all right in de day-time, but it's gettin' so, nowadays, dat when I go home at night, I meet myself comin' to work in de mornin'.

(KITTY enters L. *Great change in KITTY; much happier; livelier*)

KITTY. Good evening, Andy? How's the boy?

ANDY. You know, Miss Kitty, that son o' mine——

(*Enter L. MISS ROGERS, wearing a brilliant red dress under her heavy coat. She is adorned with beads and large earrings. The impression conveyed is that she will remain young, at all costs. For now she has found the well-spring of Optimism through her propinquity to JIMMY*)

MISS ROGERS. Andy, take my things upstairs.

KITTY. Good evening, Miss Rogers.

MISS ROGERS. I'm so glad you're here. (*ANDY exits R.*) I want to have a good heart-to-heart talk with you. I'm in the most terrible dilemma.

KITTY. (*L. of table*) What's the trouble? (*They are both removing their wraps*)

MISS ROGERS. (*R. of table*) I'm thinking of getting married! (*Begins to powder her nose, etc.*)

Nervously) I must speak to someone—and I thought you would do as well as anyone else.

KITTY. (*Laughs*) Thank you, Miss Rogers!

MISS ROGERS. My dear, the postmaster proposed to me last night, and I've been nervous ever since. I'm so afraid if I marry him I'll always be wondering if I couldn't have DONE BETTER—had I waited a little longer.

KITTY. (*Sincerely, as she sits at L. of table*) I'm sure you'll be very happy.

MISS ROGERS. Oh, but it's taking such a chance. (*Shrugs her shoulders*) But then, if one never takes a chance, one never gets anywhere in the world. I never believed in GAMBLING—but it seems there's no way out of it.

KITTY. I think you are the most fortunate of women, Miss Rogers. Some good man loves you and will take care of you. It's beautiful!

MISS ROGERS. My mother's niece used to say, "A wedding march is the beginning of misery. A funeral march, the end of it."

KITTY. You'll not leave me here until we find someone to take your place?

MISS ROGERS. My dear, don't have me married off—YET! A woman has the privilege of changing her mind. I'm still debating.

KITTY. I thought you said you had accepted him.

MISS ROGERS. It was this way. Hank began by telling me how wonderful it would be if we could sail through life honeymooning! He told me about New York and Indianapolis and—OMAHA! (*Sighs happily*) It was irresistible—and I fell for it. Oh, I know now—it's the thought of a honeymoon that bamboozles a woman into saying "Yes."

KITTY. Well?

MISS ROGERS. (*Stiffens up as though she were on the defensive*) When Hank got me where he

wanted me, he began to talk about SAVING. He squirmed, wriggled, then he spluttered, "Delie, if you love me, let's call the trip off and put the money in the bank." I'd told him only a second before that I loved him. What could I do? But between you and me, what do you know about that—for the tail-end of a proposal?

KITTY. Hank is a regular business man.

MISS ROGERS. Starting in to wash dishes right after the ceremony will take all the ginger out of married life. What would YOU do?

KITTY. Hank didn't propose to me.

MISS ROGERS. (*Troubled*) I wish to Heaven HE WOULD HAVE!

KITTY. I'm sure he'll make you a good husband. (*Rises; turns to L.*)

MISS ROGERS. He don't believe in theaters, or dances, or clubs, or cafés, no kind of sociability. He's just smitten with the U. S. Government!

KITTY. Then he'll make a good home for you, and, after all, that's what every woman needs.

MISS ROGERS. My dear, I've had a good home. I need TRAVEL. London, Paris, and oh, dear, I'm just crazy to see—NIAGARY FALLS! They say the water's just WONDERFUL there!

KITTY. After all, it rests with you.

MISS ROGERS. (*Rises; crosses to KITTY*) I suppose it does. But, my dear, take my advice. Don't let yourself get in the mess I'm in. I didn't sleep a wink last night. I'm sure, if I marry Hank, I'll be so unhappy—and if I don't marry him, I'll be unhappy, too!

KITTY. Why don't you go to Jimmy with your troubles? He'll help you.

MISS ROGERS. (*Whispers; as if the worst thing had come to light*) Haven't you heard?

KITTY. Heard? What?

MISS ROGERS. They call him the "man of mystery." My dear, I'm mighty glad HE didn't propose to me.

(BOBBY enters L.)

BOBBY. Some excitement in this burg. Well, if it comes to anything, I'm strong for Mr. Jimmy.

KITTY. What's the matter, Bobby?

BOBBY. Nothing—really. That's the trouble. There hasn't been a scandal in a New York paper in a week. So somebody starts something here—and, I presume, gets paid for it.

KITTY. But, Jimmy—what can they say about Jimmy? He has helped everyone around here. (Pause. BOBBY is serious) Tell me. They must be saying SOMETHING—if there's excitement. (BOBBY turns from KITTY)

MISS ROGERS. People don't say anything when they talk, THESE DAYS. They just start their mouths a-going, then they go off and leave them!

KITTY. Bobby, tell me!

BOBBY. (Turning towards KITTY) Listen, Kit, what do you care what people say? So long as you love him? (With enthusiasm which mounts higher and higher) Be independent; be strong; stick to him through thick and thin. Kitty, be a MAN!!!

KITTY. Bobby, you frighten me!

BOBBY. Remember the Devil's Curve hold-up? He arrived on that day. You heard that the State offered a reward of \$1,000 for the capture of the bandits.

KITTY. Yes. Go on!

BOBBY. Since you have taken such a violent fancy to Mr. Jimmy, Arnold Baker's become a detective. He keeps trying to find things to point suspicion towards the Boss. If he'd work half as hard at this business, he'd be a millionaire.

KITTY. Go on! (*Tensely*)

BOBBY. It is rumored about town that Arnold told Mr. Jimmy he was going to find out all about him. And Mr. Jimmy answered, "It doesn't make much difference what I was. I'm a gentleman now. Why don't you try to be the same?"

KITTY. I don't believe Jimmy would say a thing like that.

BOBBY. You never were in the room with him when he was ALONE with another man, were you?

KITTY. (*Laughs in spite of herself*) No! Does Jimmy know what people are saying?

BOBBY. Of course not.

MISS ROGERS. My mother's aunt used to say, "If it weren't for the fools in the world, the newspapers couldn't get out a daily edition." (*Exits R. KITTY sinks into chair at R. of table, very worried*)

BOBBY. (*Looks at her sympathetically*) I know how you feel. (*Crosses to her; pats her, pal-like, on her shoulder; shakes his head slowly, thoughtfully; crosses to R.; exits slowly through door, marked "Advertising Manager."*) KITTY rises, weakly; goes to typewriter table; takes vocer from typewriter, as JIMMY enters L. She looks up; smiles sadly. JIMMY crosses to her; whispers something in her ear)

JIMMY. (*With a dash of mischievousness*) Yes?

KITTY. No!

JIMMY. (*A bit disappointed; takes off his fine overcoat and hat; puts them on elevator bench*) Kitty, my girl, in the future when I make my declaration of love, I shall LIE a little!

KITTY. Jimmy!

JIMMY. I see now why every man must lie a little when he proposes. The girl won't have him—if he doesn't!

KITTY. You don't mean that? (JIMMY *unlocks his office door*) Jimmy—I just heard—— (Stops; she sees JOHN *entering door L.*)

JIMMY. (*Unlocking door "General Manager"*) Go on. I'm an attentive audience.

JOHN. Good evening, Miss Kitty. Jimmy, my boy! (JOHN *is now completely changed; walks more erect; has an air of poise; is more alert and keenly alive to present-day conditions; wears the air of a man who has faith in himself—a man who has prospered financially and mentally and morally. KITTY crosses to R.*)

JIMMY. (*Turns around; pats JOHN affectionately on his shoulder*) And how's my grand old man on this 15th day of December? (*Sincerely; laughs good-naturedly*) With a fine new suit on—and a shirt—a PINK shirt, Miss Kitty. Behold our dapper, young man!

JOHN. You once told me there's psychology to colors. I never understood it, Jimmy, but I believe you. (*He looks toward windows. KITTY exits R.*) It was sort of cloudy to-day so I thought a bright color might help some. (*Crosses R. to chair*)

JIMMY. (*Scrutinizing JOHN*) J. T., there's something distressing you. You didn't sleep well last night.

JOHN. How do you know?

JIMMY. J. T., you're handsome when you smile—and when you don't, you're worried. Now, tell me, why is the flag at half mast? (*Laughs; leads JOHN gently to chair by large table. JOHN removes his overcoat; sits*)

JOHN. All last night I rehearsed every scene since your arrival. How you found the factory; how you found me, starved mentally because of overwork; how you taught me to be happy; how you made Graham and Bartlett and Higgins believe

in us; how you transformed Bobby Day. It's wonderful!

JIMMY. (*At table*) Is that what kept you awake?

JOHN. I couldn't help thinking how we've grown to such proportions that now the entire commercial world is talking about our success.

JIMMY. (*Laughs*) And that's why you couldn't sleep?

JOHN. It's a miracle!

JIMMY. (*Strong*) Miracle—nothing! We've grown big—because we have been RELIGIOUS!

JOHN. (*Surprised*) What???

JIMMY. (*As JOHN absentmindedly takes a baby-shoe from his pocket and fondles it*) What we have manufactured has shown there's a principle behind our work. Do you know why that little baby-shoe is the most popular one in the country to-day? And all in eight short months?

JOHN. A miracle, my boy—and YOU!

JIMMY. (*Enthusiastically*) No! Just right THINKING applied to daily living, oozes out of every stitch in that shoe. We've shown by our actions we believe in our own greatness and in the greatness of others. And, above all, we've BEEN HONEST! We have given more than a dollar's worth for a dollar. We have been supplying human wants faithfully and we have been singing the song of success while we've been doing it. We've been DECENT in the game of business—and nothing can keep DECENCY down!

JOHN. Jimmy, my boy, let me talk plainly. Do you really think that bluffing Bartlett and Higgins and Graham into believing we were a corporation was honest?

JIMMY. Didn't we file corporation papers immediately? Haven't we made GOOD? Hasn't

every dollar they put in here TREBLED? We—dishonest? No! We have been CHARITABLE!!!

JOHN. But——

JIMMY.—Why, before we incorporated this village was only a dot on the map. When the engineer saw it in the distance, the train always got up more steam—and SHOT BY! To-day, the crack Limited stops without a signal from the flagman, and the conductor shrieks at the top of his voice, "This is the Home of the Cinderella Factory. To the left, ladies and gentlemen, that tall yellow building is the father of all the little white buildings." (*Both men laugh good-naturedly*) J. T., I call that the sweetest music I've ever heard—and I wouldn't apologize to even Wagner for saying it. (*JOHN has risen; is now at R., looking out of window*)

JOHN. I'm afraid it's going to rain. Do you remember that terrible storm—the day you came here, Jimmy? (*With weighty thoughts preying on his mind*)

JIMMY. J. T., you're not yourself. Why refer to that day I came? (*Pause. Looks at JOHN, quizzically; exits to him*) Is it you feel you can get along without me? If so, don't hesitate to tell me. (*Pause; JOHN hangs his head*)

JOHN. My boy, I've learned to love you—as I would my own son!

JIMMY. I know you do. I love you as I would have loved my own father, had I known him—and yet, I'm remaining only so long as you need me—and—because I love Miss Kitty. (*Humorously*) I've been waiting almost six months to hear that little word that only takes a sixteenth of a second to say to make a man happy for life. But she always loses her tongue at the most inconvenient time. (*KITTY enters from R. with ANDY, who pulls down the shades*)

JOHN. My boy, I want to talk to you—about——
(*Says the above as though it were a subject of great importance; when he sees KITTY, he stops; crosses to door marked "PRESIDENT"*) I'll speak to you later. (*Exits through door*)

JIMMY. (*Stands for a moment deep in thought; KITTY comes up behind him; he turns; shakes off his seriousness; smiles down upon her*) Shall I begin to "fib" a little? Or shall I ask you, what are you going to tell me now, to cheer me on?

KITTY. I'm going to tell you, you're very—very romantic. And now, I want you to be very serious—because I have something to tell you. I was upstairs with Michael. He's in the cutting room, working under the strain of a terrible grief. His wife—just passed on!

JIMMY. (*Appears very concerned*) Is Michael the tall bronzed man?

KITTY. Yes.

JIMMY. I'm sorry! We must send him home. (*Picks up receiver of telephone*) Hello . . . cutting room . . . Bill? Tell Michael he may have a week's vacation on full pay. (*Hangs up receiver*)

KITTY. (*Gratefully*) That's just like you, Jimmy—so good and kind!

JIMMY. It must be hard, dear, to lose one one loves! (*Looks at KITTY with a wealth of love in his eyes*)

KITTY. Jimmy, I've never seen you so serious. Aren't you satisfied to know I love you? Jimmy, do you know people are talking about you?

JIMMY. They must say something to keep from falling asleep with the roosters, Kitty.

KITTY. Do you know what they are saying?

JIMMY. (*Lightly*) Um-hum! Mrs. Higgins told me I should be shot. She said, one can see it in your eyes, I'm breaking your heart.

KITTY. They're saying more than that, Jimmy!

JIMMY. (*Takes both her hands in his; leans over table*) When will we stop their idle gossip, Kitty? Tell me! (*JIMMY comes to her, very close; about to take her in his arms*)

KITTY. I want to wait until my brother comes! (*A shade of sadness crosses JIMMY's face*) Jimmy, it won't be long. I'm sure he'll come soon.

JIMMY. I hope so.

KITTY. He will, dear. I know it. Billie has never failed me yet. (*Trying to find some reason for his absence*) I suppose he's been sailing along on the wings of success—and he's likely to have forgotten how much he means to me. I want him to be our best man. Dear, you know I love you. There never has been any man in my life—but just YOU! You're first, last and always. You're my big, wonderful man!

JIMMY. That's the 999th time.

KITTY. I never tire of speaking the truth, Jimmy.

JIMMY. Don't tell me the truth so often. Tell me something that's going to make me feel BETTER.

KITTY. For instance?

JIMMY. That you can't live another moment without me.

KITTY. Jimmy, if you plead very hard, I—I might give my consent to our marriage—to-morrow! (*JIMMY clasps her to him, joyously*)

JIMMY. Kitty, you've made me the happiest man in the world. (*They kiss; hold it; then draw apart*)

KITTY. Now I must get to work. (*She crosses to door "PRESIDENT"; turns to him, half embarrassed*) If I make any mistakes to-day, will you "fire" me?

JIMMY. (*Laughs; answers in a business tone*)

Miss Kitty, there's never any excuse for mistakes—except when one is figuring on buying a trousseau in a hurry! (*Both laugh; KITTY exits down R. JIMMY crosses to table; picks up a few papers; looks them over as ANDY enters L.*)

ANDY. Excuse me, Mr. Jimmy, dar's a man outside who wants to see Miss Kitty.

JIMMY. Tell Miss Kitty.

ANDY. Yes, suh, but I thought you had better see him fust. He don' look right to me, suh.

JIMMY. What's wrong with him?

ANDY. He ain't nothin' but a boy, suh, but he's awful worried and his clothes ain't what my son's goin' to wear——

JIMMY. Probably looking for charity. Send him in. I'll see him.

ANDY. Yes, suh, Mr. Jimmy. You know, dat son o' mine——

JIMMY. Show him in, Andy. I'm in a hurry. (*ANDY exits L. JIMMY takes a suit-box from table; puts it against "General Manager" door. BILLIE enters L.; wears long raincoat; tan shoes; slouch hat*)

BILLIE. (*Sees JIMMY; draws back*) Oh, I—I wanted to see my—Miss Blake. (*BILLIE BLAKE is a typical appearing "down-and-outer": a boy who has failed to make good, because of an inherent weakness. There is nothing of the criminal in BILLIE; he merely lacks stamina, and he needs a guiding hand*)

JIMMY. Come in. Shut the door. Now, what do you know about Miss Blake?

BILLIE. Nothing. I—I just want to see her.

JIMMY. Are you in trouble? Is it money?

BILLIE. No—I—I—just——

JIMMY. Come! Out with it! What do you want of Miss Blake? Who are you, anyway?

BILLIE. You've no right to question me. I want to see Miss Blake—and it's none of your business why—and it doesn't matter who I am. She's—well, I want to see her. That's all!

JIMMY. Perhaps I've been a little brusque, but I hope to marry her shortly—and I'm interested——

BILLIE. (*Surprised*) You're going to marry her? (*With some emotion*)

JIMMY. I hope so.

BILLIE. That's different. (*His tone causes JIMMY to eye him, severely*) I'm sorry—I—I didn't mean—I'll see her—some other time. (*Very brokenly*)

JIMMY. Wait a moment. Where have I seen you before? (*BILLIE tries to make a dash for door down L.*) Wait! I KNOW! You're the——

BILLIE. (*With a suppressed cry*) No, I'm not—you're wrong—I'm not the man!

JIMMY. Not what man? You're in too much of a hurry, boy! (*Grapples with him; holds him*)

BILLIE. (*Trying to free himself*) You let me go—let me out of here——

JIMMY. Not quite so fast! You're the young fellow with whom I had the struggle the night of the hold-up. You're the boy who was standing guard. Don't be frightened—I could have held you that night if I had wanted to give you to the officers—but there was too much good in your face. I couldn't do it. And you've brought me luck. I stopped off here, thinking you might drift into this town—and I stayed instead of going through. I found work and happiness here—while waiting for you to come back. (*Pause*) I couldn't get your look of hopeless misery out of my mind, boy, for a long time.

BILLIE. Who are you?

JIMMY. (*Half evasively*) I hope you are face to face with—YOUR BETTER SELF!

BILLIE. Tell me—— (*With some fear in his voice*)

JIMMY. I'm your friend. I proved it that night. Now tell me, why do you want to see Miss Blake? (*Pause. BILLIE hangs his head in shame*) Are you any——? (*A look of horror comes into JIMMY's eyes*) You're not——? You're not her bro——?

BILLIE. I am her brother!

JIMMY. My God! Her brother—and mixed up in a deal like that!

BILLIE. Wait! You don't know—you don't know——

JIMMY. Tell me. I want to know—everything!

BILLIE. We both had to work for our living and Kitty sent me away where there were bigger opportunities. She always believed in me—that I'd be successful, and do big things. I didn't—I got in wrong, nothing crooked, but I didn't seem to get a start. I gave up and started to make my way back here to begin again with her. Have you ever tried to beat your way for any distance? (*JIMMY shakes his head "no"*) Well, you meet some strange people. I traveled two days with the men who tried to get that express box. I didn't know who they were, nor why they wanted to hang around Devil's Curve. Finally, early that night, they told me—and threatened me if I didn't stick. I was to have the easy end of it—just hold back the crew when they came out—and I was to have a share. I was tempted—until the time came—and when they began to shoot at the door—I turned and ran—not through fear of what might have happened to me, but to get away from any chance of doing wrong. From that time on, you know what happened. I ran straight into your arms—and after the talking

you gave me I couldn't have done wrong if I had tried! God, but you were good to me!

JIMMY. Why didn't you come to her then?

BILLIE. I was afraid—I knew they'd search. I've been in hiding until it blew over—doing odd jobs for farmers—anything to get along—but I couldn't stay away any longer. I had to see—my sister.

JIMMY. Don't you know there's a reward out for—

BILLIE. (*Wildly*) You won't let them get me—you'll help me.

JIMMY. Quiet! Your sister's in there.

BILLIE. (*Points to L.*) In there?

JIMMY. Wait! She mustn't see you now—almost in rags, with every mark of failure. You've got to be a success—to look like one at least. There—(*Sees suit-box up L.*)—the very thing—a suit of mine—just from the tailor. I was sending it back—it's too small. (*Gives box to BILLIE*) Quick—into my office—and change.

BILLIE. (*Half-stunned*) I don't know—I can't—

JIMMY. Don't talk! Act! But promise me one thing. Whatever happens, you must under no conditions tell your sister the truth. She must always think of you as a big success. You have come home because you're lonesome for her. You have never seen me before to-day. Understand?

BILLIE. Yes! (*JIMMY opens door "GENERAL MANAGER"*)

JIMMY. (*Smiles*) Stand up, boy! Shoulders back; head erect; and SMILE! (*BILLIE tries to straighten up; succeeds; smiles*) There! You know, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*BILLIE exits through "General Manager" door; takes suit-box with him. JIMMY is about to*

cross to R. when ARNOLD BAKER enters down L.)
How do you do, Mr. Baker?

ARNOLD. (*Dallies with a cane; smokes cigarette*)
My uncle down yet?

JIMMY. Yes!

ARNOLD. You people work day and night, don't you? (*Raps on door marked "PRESIDENT."*)

JIMMY walks up to ARNOLD; takes cigarette from his mouth)

JIMMY. Allow me to relieve you of your cigarette. We have 500 girls working on the floors above. We can't take any chances of imperiling their lives. (*Crosses to "GENERAL MANAGER" door as ARNOLD again raps on "PRESIDENT" door; JIMMY laughs; ARNOLD shoots an angry glance at JIMMY*) Ah, Mr. Baker, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*Exits through door marked "GENERAL MANAGER" as BOBBY enters R. through door marked "ADVERTISING MANAGER"*)

BOBBY. Hello, old top! (*Exits to Manager's door at L.*)

ARNOLD. Well, of all the—— You look like you've struck prosperity. (*BOBBY raps on door*)

BOBBY. I'm the best advertising manager the Cinderella Corporation ever had.

ARNOLD. You're the only one they ever had. (*JIMMY's door opens; BOBBY hands him large sheet*)

BOBBY. Want you to look over the proof sheet. (*JIMMY takes sheet; his door closes; BOBBY crosses to R.*) Excuse me, but to-day's my busy day. (*With a feeling of superiority, he exits R. into his office through door marked "ADVERTISING MANAGER."* ARNOLD stands laughing. Door marked "PRESIDENT" opens; JOHN enters R.)

JOHN. (*Quickly to ARNOLD*) Well? What have you found out?

ARNOLD. The worst.

JOHN. (*Astonished; apprehensive; looks in direction of JIMMY's office*) I'll not believe it!

ARNOLD. (*Smoothly*) Nevertheless, it's your duty to sift this thing to the bottom. You want to protect yourself and others. Mr. Bartlett tells me the truth must be proven—whatever the truth is. (*Sits on arm of chair, back of table; talks lightly*)

JOHN. (*His grave concern presents a striking contrast to ARNOLD's superficiality*) Bartlett? When did he get to town?

ARNOLD. A few moments ago. He came in with Graham. They're coming up here with Higgins to—— (*KITTY enters from the "PRESIDENT" door down R. ARNOLD sees her and for a moment forgets everything else; rises from arm of chair; sweetly*) Good evening, Miss Kitty.

KITTY. (*Very lady-like*) Good evening! (*KITTY raps on BOBBY's door up R.*)

JOHN. (*Very worried*) I'll ring Bartlett up. I suppose he's stopping at the Palace Hotel. (*Exits through door down R.*)

KITTY. (*Calls to BOBBY*) Bobby, this is Kitty—with some "cuts" for the new catalogue. (*BOBBY's door opens; hand is thrust out. KITTY hands him the cuts. Door closes; she stands back. ARNOLD crosses to her*)

ARNOLD. I've been away nearly four months, Kitty—Miss Kitty—can't you say you're glad to see me?

KITTY. (*Politely*) I've said the only thing I can say.

ARNOLD. Working hard?

KITTY. Rather.

ARNOLD. I've been thinking of you every day. You know why. (*She turns from him; crosses to L.*) I didn't think it was so offensive.

KITTY. Now that you know, I hope you will never speak of it again.

ARNOLD. That's pretty tough on a man when he works hard. I'm working a great deal out of business hours on this hold-up affair. I'm still with the New York Detective Agency. (*Goes to water stand; drinks as he talks*)

KITTY. I can think of more honorable professions than hounding criminals.

ARNOLD. That's Law!

KITTY. If a man makes a mistake, give him a chance to live it down—and make himself anew.

ARNOLD. That's sentiment.

KITTY. It is neither sentiment nor law. It is RIGHT THINKING!

ARNOLD. (*Laughs caddishly*) Beautiful! The man from Heaven must have taught you that, eh?

KITTY. (*As she walks toward R.; about to open door*) Can you teach me anything HALF so beautiful?

ARNOLD. You've been taken in by that man. Some day you'll see different. When the ice breaks, Kitty, I hope the water won't be too COLD. If it is, send for me. I'll rescue you—— (*Crosses to R.*)

KITTY. (*Fights back, angrily*) If you mean what they're saying about him—— (*JIMMY enters from GENERAL MANAGER door*) I don't believe a word of it.

ARNOLD. I don't expect you to—YET!

JIMMY. Kitty, my girl, I have a fine surprise for you. (*He opens door up L.*)

KITTY. (*Utters a low cry of fear*) Jimmy!

JIMMY. Your brother is here. (*KITTY can hardly believe her own ears*) Come! (*Beckons KITTY to enter his private office*)

KITTY. Billie? (*She rushes to door up L., and*

with a happy cry she exits through GENERAL MANAGER door) Billie—

JIMMY. (*Crosses to c.; a bit stern*) Just what have you been telling Miss Kitty?

ARNOLD. We'll talk things over—later. (*Exits down R. Door of ADVERTISING MANAGER opens; hand is thrust out, holding card on which is printed, "BUSY. DO NOT DISTURB." Card is hung on nail in c. of door; door is closed quickly. JIMMY notices this; stands smiling as BILLIE and KITTY enter from GENERAL MANAGER door—up L.*)

KITTY. Isn't Billie a fine man? Billie, this is our manager—but you may call him Jimmy!

JIMMY. I've said, "how do you do" to your brother.

KITTY. He's been so successful. Just what I had hoped he would be—and I KNEW my faith in him was not misplaced. Oh, I can hardly believe he's home. (*BILLIE stands with his eyes riveted upon the floor*)

JIMMY. As he's your guest, you'd better walk home with him. See that he's made comfortable. Then— (*Out of the corner of his eye*) I'll stay here and finish my work. You needn't come back—unless YOU WANT TO. (*BILLIE stops as if to say something*) Good-night, Billie! (*KITTY and BILLIE exit down L. Telephone rings. JIMMY picks up receiver*) This is Jimmy talking. . . . What? . . . At machine No. 4. . . . Fainted? . . . I'll be right up. (*JIMMY rushes to down L.; exits, as JOHN enters down R. Walks to BOBBY'S door; about to rap; sees the sign; smiles, when HIGGINS and BARTLETT and GRAHAM enter L.; all somewhat excited*)

JOHN. (*Turns around*) Evening, gentlemen. Be seated!

HIGGINS. (*Talks gruffly; appears nervous;*

crosses to R., while GRAHAM shakes hands with JOHN) We can't let this thing go any further, Trellavan. Jones and the rest of his gang are swearing out a warrant for the arrest of your Manager. *(Pause)*

JOHN. *(Surprised; back of table)* You can't mean THAT?

BARTLETT. *(At R. of table)* The people are worked up to a frenzy. They are crying—what's to become of the stock they hold in this corporation? *(GRAHAM, R.C.)*

JOHN. *(As though he were powerless; sits down heavily)* Good Heavens!

HIGGINS. They're sure he's implicated in the train robbery, and they're afraid of the security of the funds of this business so long as he's at the head of it. *(Strong; convincing)*

JOHN. Mr. Higgins, the boy is as honest as I am. I would trust him with every cent I own.

HIGGINS. *(Pounds fist on table)* Trellavan, with a man looked upon as a crook——

JOHN. *(Rises; flushed with anger)* Mr. Higgins, I forbid the use of that word in conjunction with Jimmy's name!

HIGGINS. *(With another pound of his fist upon the table)* With that man at the head of this management, the stock will drop to nothing. Every man, woman and child in the vicinity has invested in this corporation. We've got to think of them. We must protect them.

JOHN. It's an outrage. A gross injustice. The townspeople don't know what they're talking about.

HIGGINS. Then it is up to us to find out. And we're going to find out—the truth. *(Laughs sarcastically)*

GRAHAM. Yes—the truth!

HIGGINS. Who is he? I've got fifteen thousand

dollars invested in this concern, now. And I want to know who's running it. And I want to know ALL about him.

JOHN. Jimmy says, "You can't judge a man by the size of his bank account, nor by the number of battles his ancestors have fought. You can only judge a man by what he does, what he says and the way he says it." And Jimmy's right!

GRAHAM. (*Nervously*) I have five thousand dollars in this corporation.

HIGGINS. Where is he?

JOHN. In his office, working on a report to submit to the Directors. (*HIGGINS rises; crosses to the GENERAL MANAGER door; about to rap; JOHN stops him. BARTLETT and GRAHAM are seated at table*) Wait! Mr. Higgins, when you speak to him, remember "I" consider him a gentleman. Insult him—and you insult ME.

HIGGINS. (*Raps on door; gruffly*) Business is business.

JOHN. And honor is honor. Respect it by giving him the benefit of the doubt.

HIGGINS. (*Knocks again on door; no answer; opens door; sees that the room is empty; bangs door shut; faces JOHN defiantly*) Well? The Bird HAS FLOWN!!! He's not in there. Where is he?

(*JIMMY enters down L.*)

JIMMY. Good evening, gentlemen.

BARTLETT. Evening.

JIMMY. I'm glad you're all here. I have a report I want to show you. Our assets are getting larger all the time. Wait! I'll get it! (*Too busy to notice the cold reception accorded him. He exits up L.; then immediately enters. Gradually it has become darker. It now begins to rain*) Come! Sit

down, Mr. Higgins. Let's talk this over. (JIMMY sits c.; JOHN at R. BARTLETT and GRAHAM are already seated; turns to HIGGINS, who stands L. Smiles at HIGGINS) It's just as cheap to sit as to stand, Mr. Higgins. Have a cigar? (*Very amiably*)

HIGGINS. There's something very important we have to say to you.

JIMMY. (*Notices for the first time the unkindly expression displayed towards him. For a moment, he stands in silence; slowly turns to JOHN and other men; then, in a voice very low and almost apologetic*) If there is anything I have done that displeases you, I—I beg of you to tell me about it.

BARTLETT. We are more than pleased with the results of your labors—but——

JIMMY. (*After a pause*) But? I am waiting. (*Each man feels the delicacy of the situation; each waits for the other to begin*) Well?

JOHN. My boy, there seems to be a little friction here at present.

JIMMY. Here—in the factory?

JOHN. No. In the town!

HIGGINS. Little friction? Why, the town's mad with trouble.

JIMMY. (*With a smile*) With four thousand persons in a town, there must be some trouble now and then. The policemen couldn't hold their jobs if there wasn't.

JOHN. This is serious.

JIMMY. Then, let's all smile—and thank God it isn't worse. Come on! Fire away!

BARTLETT. To begin with, people are talking——

JIMMY. Think how terrible it would be—if they couldn't.

HIGGINS. Yes siree! They're standing on the street corners; in Patty Magee's Chop House. Everywhere they're whispering it. The Ladies' Aid-

ers called a meeting. They were up late last night because of it——

JIMMY. Hurrah for the Electric Light Company.

HIGGINS. They're saying, do you know what?

JIMMY. No!

JOHN. (*Shakes his head*) It's a wicked world.

JIMMY. There's where you're wrong, J. T. It's a good world with enough of the wicked in it—to make it interesting. Well? Why these preliminaries? All of you are trying to tell me something. If it's about——

HIGGINS. If you remember, a year ago——

BARTLETT. (*Takes up the sentence where HIGGINS left off, as he hesitated to say further*)—a train was held up—at the Devil's Curve——

GRAHAM. —five miles down the line.

BARTLETT. Since then, the county and the state have been working on the case and, strange to say,——

HIGGINS. —have been unable to find the bandits.

JIMMY. (*Buoyantly*) Good! I hope they never find them.

HIGGINS. What?

JIMMY. (*Cleverly; humorously*) To elude the police for a year shows they are clever chaps. We need clever men running around loose. The world's built up through brains.

HIGGINS. You believe such POPPY-COCK?

JIMMY. (*With finesse and a touch of the heroic*) It don't cost anything to THINK THAT—and it's so much nicer than wishing them caught! (*Smiles; men look at each other, as they try to fathom JIMMY's strange philosophy*)

JOHN. I see, my boy, you do not understand. People have put two and two together. A story here and a story there! They believe they know one of the men who held up that train.

JIMMY. J. T., we had a stenographer once who invariably put two and two together and made SIX. It's the easiest thing in the world to make mistakes.

JOHN. They claim they have traced the one man to this town. (*Pause. JIMMY grows serious*)

JIMMY. (*Quietly, as he thinks of BILLIE*) TRACED???? (*HIGGINS nudges BARTLETT; as much as to indicate JIMMY is not so jovial now. Pause*)

HIGGINS. Yes, sir. Traced!!!

JIMMY. They must be pretty sure, then, that they have found the man?

JOHN. They think they are sure.

JIMMY. (*Begins to plan how he can save BILLIE*) Then he—he—has been WATCHED? (*Registering some fear*)

JOHN. (*Sadly*) Yes! (*JIMMY's anxiety grows; he is quiet, intense, and does not notice that all eyes are upon him. His mind is working rapidly; his one thought is to save KITTY from learning the truth*)

JIMMY. (*After pause, during which he has formulated plans to save BILLIE*) Watched?

JOHN. (*Notices JIMMY's distress; then in a tone that implies, "Don't tell me you're the man!"*) Jimmy!!!!

JIMMY. (*Crosses to back*) I'm thinking——

HIGGINS. (*In ugly tone*) Come! Come! YOU know who the man is! (*JIMMY wheels about suddenly, surprised; looks at HIGGINS, querulously; then quickly walks to door up L.*)

JOHN. What are you going to do?

JIMMY. I'm going to get my hat and coat.

JOHN. (*With a shade of disappointment*) My boy——

JIMMY. I'll be back in a few moments.

HIGGINS. You can't leave here. (*Menacingly. Men have risen; stand apprehensive*)

JIMMY. Didn't you ask me to help you?

HIGGINS. Answer Mr. Trellavan's question. What are you going to do?

JIMMY. Gentlemen, what do you think I'm going to do? We must all work together to lift the shadow of disgrace from the man who—(*Notices the strange attitude of men*)—who—so he can start life over again. Isn't that what you think we should do? (*As he pleads for BILLIE, the men believe he is pleading for himself*) He is young; you know that. A moment of impulse—and it was over. He's not bad at heart. Gentlemen, would you condemn a man for something he has since repented for? (*No answer; he continues*) Give him a chance to make good. Don't hand him over to the law—the merciless law that will stifle the good that is in him—that will crush his very soul, that will make of him a man without a future! Gentlemen, let us see that he escapes! (*HIGGINS walks to doorway at L., thus blocking JIMMY's exit*)

JOHN. My boy, where do you want to go?

HIGGINS. He can't get out this way.

JIMMY. (*Down L. Crosses to down R.*) Why do you disapprove, Mr. Higgins?

HIGGINS. And you can't get out that way.

JOHN. Can't—

HIGGINS. (*To JOHN*) He's being watched—
(*To JIMMY*) You've been watched—for weeks.

JIMMY. Me? (*To HIGGINS, as KITTY enters down L.*) I—watched? What for?

JOHN. Suspicion has been directed towards you!

JIMMY. (*Looks at JOHN in a quandary; then, as if throwing a great weight from his shoulders, he says, serio-comically*) Me? They may as well direct suspicion toward me as toward anyone else. (*Smiles; half-amused*) And may I ask—why?

JOHN. You arrived the very day of the hold-up, unfortunately.

JIMMY. I always thought my arrival was very fortunate.

HIGGINS. No one knows where you came from——

JIMMY. What matters that? The HERE and NOW is what counts!

JOHN. But that's what caused the first germ of suspicion to grow. (JIMMY smiles)

GRAHAM. (*Aside to BARTLETT*) Look! He's laughing! (JIMMY'S smile grows broader; he chuckles; then gives vent to a hearty laugh)

HIGGINS. (*Grouchy*) I don't think much of a man who laughs in the face of trouble.

JIMMY. Any fool can laugh when he's happy, Mr. Higgins. (HIGGINS hurls his words at JIMMY. HIGGINS stands at extreme L. of table, leans over it. JIMMY is at extreme R. of table; he smiles his words across to HIGGINS. JOHN up C. BARTLETT and GRAHAM near window at back. KITTY listens, down L.)

HIGGINS. To say the least, your laugh is as mysterious as you are.

JIMMY. Nothing in the world is mysterious when you understand it, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS. Then, tell me, why did you come into town that day?

JIMMY. I think that fire-escape of yours must have been the magnet. (*Continues jesting*) Or maybe I was foolish. I see now, I should have gone to a larger town where I couldn't have attracted so much attention.

HIGGINS. I knew you couldn't answer my question. Let me ask you another. Why did you want to leave this building a moment ago?

JIMMY. That's something for you to think about, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS. You haven't answered my question.
(*Brings fist on table with a pound*)

JIMMY. No, sir.

HIGGINS. Will you answer it?

JIMMY. No, sir!

GRAHAM. Why not?

JIMMY. Because you wouldn't believe me if I did answer it.

HIGGINS. You won't answer it, eh? Then I'll do it for you. You—you are the man who held up that train. (*JIMMY stands unmoved by the accusation*)

JOHN. (*Trembling*) Mr. Higgins!

HIGGINS. I suspected him when I came up here. I'm sure NOW. Can't you see why he came to this town? He knew he was safe and secure so long as he was working in this factory.

JOHN. Mr. Higgins, this boy came to me when I was down and——

JIMMY. (*Hurriedly silences him*) J. T., that incident is closed. Remember, you promised me that. (*JOHN looks at JIMMY with a pathetic appeal*)

HIGGINS. The truth, sooner or later, comes to the surface.

JIMMY. What's that, Mr. Higgins?

HIGGINS. (*Strong, as he faces JIMMY defiantly*) The truth, sooner or later, comes to the surface.

JIMMY. I hope you'll remember that.

HIGGINS. Eh? (*Picks up his hat*) Trellavan, I wash my hands of this matter. It's a dirty affair!

JIMMY. Washing your hands will do you no good. It's the SOUL that GOD INSPECTS!

HIGGINS. (*Losing his temper*) I shall sell my stock at whatever I can get for it.

JOHN. (*Pathetically*) Mr. Higgins—(*HIGGINS crosses to L. JOHN puts his hand on HIGGINS' arm, appealingly*)—you won't do that? It will ruin us.

HIGGINS. At whatever I can get for it!

JIMMY. Mr. Higgins! (HIGGINS *exits down L.*) Isn't Higgins handsome when he smiles like that? (*Slight pause*) He knows every deal I ever consummated in this business has been honest and above board.

BARTLETT. In this town, yes!

JIMMY. And in every other town, Mr. Bartlett.

GRAHAM. Well, where there's SMOKE, there's A FIRE!

JIMMY. (*Strong*) And sometimes there's a FALSE ALARM!

BARTLETT. (*To JOHN*) Trellavan, I have ten thousand shares of stock I wish to dispose of quickly. If you'll buy them from me, I'll let them go at fifty cents on the dollar.

GRAHAM. I have a couple thousand shares I want to sell. I'll take forty cents on the dollar——

JOHN. Good Heavens, men—that——

JIMMY. So, it's come to the point where you can't trust me? (BARTLETT *does not know how to answer the question; he senses JIMMY's superiority, yet he feels there is circumstantial evidence against him. For a moment, BARTLETT scrutinizes JIMMY; then he turns to JOHN*)

BARTLETT. I'll see you to-morrow, Mr. Trellavan. (BARTLETT *picks up his hat; he and GRAHAM exit L.*)

JIMMY. (*Stands c.; hands in pockets; almost unconcerned*) J. T., you're in luck! Those men own somewhere around thirty thousand shares. You can buy them back for \$1,500—or less. It's a fine buy.

JOHN. Jimmy, my boy! Come! Sit down! We want to talk this over! (*Sees KITTY; does not want to talk on*)

JIMMY. That's all right, J. T. Miss Kitty is in-

terested in hearing all you have to tell me. Come, dear! (*Motions KITTY to sit at table; she crosses to L., sits*)

JOHN. My boy, I want to help you. (*An air of sadness pervades, as if a bolt of sorrow had struck where happiness had once dwelt*) When I said the man had been traced to this town, the color mounted to your cheeks. When I told you he had been watched, there was a nervousness apparent—a fear you couldn't keep down. Jimmy, tell me everything.

JIMMY. (*Silently glances at KITTY; then turns to JOHN; registers amazement at JOHN'S doubt; then, in a tone very low and in a manner as though he could not believe such a thing possible*) J. T.!!!

JOHN. It cannot hurt you to hear what I have said any more than it hurts me to have said it. I love you, boy. I feel grateful. You have given me a new life—and I'm going to pay you back—if it costs me every cent I own. But you must tell me! I know your coming to this town the day of the hold-up was a coincidence. But your action in trying to leave this building so suddenly—that I cannot understand.

JIMMY. I didn't care when the others turned from me—so much—but you—J. T.—you——

KITTY. (*Rises; walks to JIMMY; puts her arms around him*) I'm here, Jimmy! (*To JOHN*) I promised to marry Jimmy to-morrow, Mr. John. (*To JIMMY*) Dear, you'll answer Mr. John for my sake, won't you?

JIMMY. There's nothing to answer, dear girl. Mr. Trellavan saw.

KITTY. But he seems to be in doubt.

JOHN. Much as I don't want to admit it, I can't understand——

KITTY. You hear, dear?

JIMMY. (*Puts her gently from him; with a soft smile*) I have been here nearly a year. Mr. Trellavan has seen me every day. By this time, he should know that what I do, I do for the best. If he thinks my wishing to leave this building is an indication of my guilt, then—I—I regret it. I can say no more.

JOHN. This is the first thing I've ever asked you that you would not explain, Jimmy.

KITTY. Why won't you? (JIMMY *watches JOHN; walks slowly toward R.*) A few words might straighten out matters. We know you're innocent. (JIMMY *stands resolute*) Jimmy! Suppose, dear, I were to tell you my happiness depended upon my knowing—why you wanted to leave here so quickly?

JIMMY. (*Looks at her with a wealth of love*) Your happiness cannot depend on that, my dear.

KITTY. (*With fear*) Does it depend upon my NOT knowing it? (*Pause*) Jimmy, I want the truth. Does it depend upon my not knowing it? (*Long pause*)

JIMMY. Happiness often depends upon silence. I cannot tell you—I will not tell you—more!

KITTY. (*Very disappointed*) Jimmy!

JIMMY. You and Mr. Trellavan must trust me.

KITTY. But you are making us think the wrong thing.

JIMMY. (*Takes her hand in his; looks at her tenderly*) Kitty, my girl, you are everything in the world I have ever wanted—everything I ever SHALL WANT. Now that life projects its jagged places, help me over them—with your love. Trust me!

KITTY. (*As she sobs*) You are making it so hard!

JIMMY. Isn't Love the divinity of Loyalty?—the

strength of FAITH? Love needs no flimsy pretexts of innocence, dear.

KITTY. Yes—but Love wants the beauty of Confidence.

JIMMY. (*He realizes KITTY doubts him*) You—too! You suspect? (*The lines of his face set; his shoulders seem to droop. For a moment, he loses the vitality of youth; his voice loses its glorious ring*) You—suspect? (*Slowly; in retrospection*) My father and mother fled from this country a few days after I was born. My father had been suspected of having stolen large sums of money from the bank of which he had been cashier. Shortly after, he died. The guilty man was caught years later, but suspicion—one of the greatest crimes the mind can give birth to—had killed my father. (*Slight pause*) You and J. T. suspect me now. You are trying to figure out why I came here—(*Gradually, his old vigor and strength return*)—why I have done what I have; why I haven't asked for a large reward; why I haven't answered the one question you put to me. I'll tell you—if you must know. (*Strong, as ARNOLD enters down L.*) All that I can tell you—is—I've tried to help others. I am HELPING OTHERS NOW. That's why I wanted to leave this building.

ARNOLD. That's a pretty good line of talk.

JIMMY. (*Wheels about briskly; sharp*) I don't expect you to believe it. It takes a BIG man to grapple with naked truth! (*Officer enters down L.*)

OFFICER. A warrant has been sworn out for your arrest.

JIMMY. (*Quietly*) On what charge?

(WARN CURTAIN)

OFFICER. You answer the description of one of

the men who held up the train at Devil's Curve, on the morning of April the second.

JIMMY (*Smiles contentedly*; KITTY *sinks down at table*) Ah, a new experience to add to those that have gone before.

JOHN. (*Weakly*) Jimmy — my boy — (*Stretches out both his arms toward him*)

JIMMY. (*Pats JOHN affectionately*) God bless you, J. T.—until I get back.

OFFICER. Are you ready?

JIMMY. Just a moment, Officer. (*To JOHN*) Michaels, in the cutting room, just lost his wife. I've given him a week's vacation on full pay. J. T., for my sake, give him another week. I—I know how he feels! (*Turns to KITTY; crosses to her; extends his hand*) Good-bye, my girl!

KITTY. Good-bye, Jimmy—

JIMMY. There will never be an hour in the day when I'll not be thinking of you, my girl. God keep you! (*Room has become very dark. It is pouring outside. JIMMY gets his hat and coat; straightens up; puts on coat; looks around room—a look in which there is a flash of sadness; then, in a voice full of conviction, mingled with a keen sense of humor*) Officer, I can't remember when I lived through a warmer day in December. (*OFFICER stands smiling. JIMMY grabs his arm; then links his arm through that of OFFICER. JIMMY smiles happily; jests with OFFICER*) Officer, you're just handsome when you smile like that!!!! (*JIMMY and the laughing OFFICER exit arm in arm down L., as JOHN, KITTY and ARNOLD stand looking at each other, deeply touched by JIMMY's amazing and unfaltering Optimism*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE. *Same as in Act III. 6.30 P.M.*

CURTAIN RISES. Discovered—two men attaching the dictograph to desk down c. The rug has been moved back, revealing the floor on which is a wire that extends from the desk to the room at L. The one detective straightens the rug. The other detective is working with the little instrument at desk. Just enough of this "business" to get over that the dictograph is there—and that ARNOLD hopes to "get" JIMMY with it. Throughout the business of attaching the dictograph, ARNOLD has stood close by, silently watchful. His attitude is one of pompousness; a cock-sured look is on his face; he is certain JIMMY is guilty and the very thought of it makes him happy. A second or two of silence—as the men work—then—

DETECTIVE. There! It's planted! Everything's O. K.!

ARNOLD. Good!

DETECTIVE. What's the idea? What's this young fellow got to do with—(*Points to dictograph*)—all this?

ARNOLD. Oh, I can't go into details now, but there's something crooked somewhere. A suit of clothes that belonged to The Kid was found in the Manager's office the day he was arrested. There's something between those two—and we're going to find out what it is.

DETECTIVE. It's the man with the smile you are after——

ARNOLD. Sure, but I want to get "something" on The Kid. I've got a mighty good reason.

DETECTIVE. (*Smiles*) I'm wise. He's got a sister.

ARNOLD. Never mind why. Let's get to business. Is this thing working right?

DETECTIVE. Couldn't work better. You can hear every whisper.

ARNOLD. Now, understand. You stay in that room—(*They cross slowly toward L.* ARNOLD *points L.*)—get every word that's spoken in here, and get it right, for you may have to swear to it in a court of law. They'll plant an officer in there by the back way, for a witness. Another thing—you've got the wires hidden?

DETECTIVE. Under the carpet, just as they are in here.

ARNOLD. If anyone comes, "duck." If you get caught, keep me out of it, understand?

DETECTIVE. Sure! Don't worry about me! (*DETECTIVE exits L.* BOBBY *enters R.* *Does not see the exiting DETECTIVE*)

BOBBY. (*With an air of gravity*) Are those expert accountants still working on Jimmy's books?

ARNOLD. They are!

BOBBY. And we are to remain here until—we know the result?

ARNOLD. Yes.

(KITTY *enters down R.*)

KITTY. (*To ARNOLD*) You sent for me? (*BOBBY exits up R. gravely*)

ARNOLD. (*Watches BOBBY exit; then comes close to KITTY*) Yes. Listen, Kitty—you don't mind if I call you "Kitty"?

KITTY. (*Buoyantly*) That's my name.

ARNOLD. Then we—you and I—may dispense with formality?

KITTY. (*Laughingly*) Of course. Isn't formality the religion of fools?

ARNOLD. (*Still in love with KITTY*) Now, you are happy—just as I've always wanted to see you.

KITTY. (*ARNOLD has come up very close to her; she holds him off at arm's length as she steps away from him*) I love the world to-day—and everything in it—because I am so happy.

ARNOLD. (*So conceited he can't see the truth*) Kit, I just knew I'd make you happy—SOME DAY!

KITTY. But—you're wrong—it's Jimmy——

ARNOLD. What?

KITTY. For a short time, I did lose faith in him, but it has come back stronger than ever. Since then I've worked—for Jimmy—and I've proven an alibi. (*With unconcealed enthusiasm*)

ARNOLD. An alibi? How?

KITTY. Yesterday, in the cash drawer of our safe, I found an old railroad ticket signed by Jimmy. I took it to Collins, the ticket agent, and he said it proved Jimmy's innocence.

ARNOLD. (*With sarcasm*) That's impossible.

KITTY. You know, when a man travels at night, the conductor takes his ticket and gives him an identification slip for it. In the morning, the ticket is returned to its owner. You should know that.

ARNOLD. (*X's to window; looks out absent-mindedly*) Well?

KITTY. The hold-up occurred at two in the morning, didn't it?

ARNOLD. Yes.

KITTY. The bandit did not remain on the train AFTER the hold-up, did he? (*ARNOLD turns to her; says nothing*) He was no fool. Admit that.

ARNOLD. The bandit escaped.

KITTY. The fact then that Jimmy's ticket was in the safe proves he was on the train all night.

ARNOLD. Ha, ha! (*The laugh, a sarcastic one, offends KITTY*)

KITTY. If he wouldn't have been on the train all night, how could he have gotten his ticket back?

ARNOLD. There's no evidence.

KITTY. The lawyers seem to think otherwise. They are sure that the ticket will clear him.

ARNOLD. The thing's absurd.

KITTY. Wait and see.

ARNOLD. (*Again drawing close to her*) Kitty—can't you see—I—LOVE YOU???

KITTY. Please—don't——

DETECTIVE. (*Appears at door at L.*) I got every word—shall I keep that last part in?

ARNOLD. No. That's private.

DETECTIVE. There's nothing private about "I LOVE YOU." They are the commonest words in the English language. Divorce statistics prove that. (*Laughs*) Whenever a man wants his own "Fourth-of-July"—he goes out and says "I love you." Then the FIREWORKS BEGIN! (*Exits up L., laughing*)

(*BILLIE enters down L., nervously; watches the DETECTIVE off; then turns to ARNOLD*)

BILLIE. I can't understand why—(*He turns to KITTY*)—they sent for me.

KITTY. Billie! What's wrong, dear? (*As she crosses to him*) You're trembling like a leaf.

BILLIE. Kit, you've been a brick to me. I'm afraid——

KITTY. Of what?

BILLIE. I'm in trouble—maybe——

ARNOLD. (*With a degree of superiority and in a tone that signifies he thinks he has caught the culprits*) Trouble's Hell, isn't it?

KITTY. (*Her arms about BILLIE; answers strong*) Hell is HEAVEN—if you want to THINK THAT WAY!

BILLIE. You'll stick by me, won't you, Kit?

KITTY. You know I will. Only tell me, Billie—tell me what is troubling you— (*She has him in her arms, and lovingly she smooths his hair back as she waits for BILLIE to explain the predicament he is in. A whistle is heard—KITTY cries out*) That's Jimmy—

ARNOLD. (*Quickly*) You come with me, Kitty.

(*Enter JIMMY, followed by the two OFFICERS down L.*)

JIMMY. Hello, everybody!

KITTY. (*Rushing to him*) Jimmy! Jimmy!

JIMMY. (*Taking hold of both of KITTY's hands; pulls her to him, but stops as he is suddenly aware of the two OFFICERS; comedy business here*) My girl!

KITTY. You're released, dear?

JIMMY. No. My two good friends are sticking pretty close to me. (*With a smile*)

ARNOLD. (*Clearing his throat as a signal for KITTY to come with him*) Ahem!

JIMMY. (*Sees ARNOLD for the first time*) Hello!! How are you?

ARNOLD. (*Does not answer JIMMY; to KITTY*) I want to see YOU. (*Smile stuff here between JIMMY and ARNOLD. JIMMY tries his best to get a smile from ARNOLD, but ARNOLD will not smile. ARNOLD exits R. and JIMMY, undaunted, whistles blithely "Patches" or "The Vamp" (something up-*

to-date) as he tries to get over to KITTY that he still is as happy as of old)

OFFICER. I'm going to leave you for a minute—I'll parole you in the custody of Miss Kitty, and I know you'll not try to run away.

JIMMY. Run away from — Miss Kitty?
NEVER! (*Smiles*)

OFFICER. (*To KITTY*) He's pretty strong with the bunch at the jail, Miss.

JIMMY. (*In a rollicking manner; to KITTY*) I'm getting into "high society."

OFFICER. (*To SECOND OFFICER*) See who is in that room. (*SECOND OFFICER X's to L. He opens door*) Empty, eh? Then come on. I'll be back in about five minutes. (*Both OFFICERS exit L.*)

KITTY. Forgive me, Jimmy. I did not know what I was doing that day—nor what I was saying. Nor for one moment did I lose my love for you.

JIMMY. Real love, my girl, can never be lost. So long as there's a world, Humanity will stand Prisoner before Love, the Jury of Eternity!

KITTY. Then you don't think it strange that I haven't tried to see you? I wanted to prove my Faith in you. They told you about the ticket?

JIMMY. What ticket, dear?

KITTY. Your railroad ticket—the one I found—the one that brought you to this town. (*BILLIE stands down L., listening intently. JIMMY appears surprised; is silent*) Your ticket! Mr. Collins, the agent at the depot, told me I've proven an alibi.

JIMMY. I never thought about that ticket.

KITTY. I wonder why they did not tell you about it.

JIMMY. The jail's no place for sociability, Kitty.

KITTY. Then why did they send you here—at this hour? (*She must get this over strong to audi-*

ence—that there is a reason for JIMMY'S presence at such an unusual hour. JIMMY registers that he knows "something is doing." He looks at BILLIE, worriedly) What's wrong?

JIMMY. *(Trying to make light of KITTY'S fear)* Nothing, dear. I'm just an important personage. Look out of that window—and you'll see my body-guard.

KITTY. I don't understand, Jimmy—but I'm afraid——

JIMMY. For me? Nonsense! I'm protected day and night.

KITTY. When I think of you—in jail——*(Then, very girlishly)* What kind of a room have you? And the meals, dear, are they——

JIMMY. God gave us the wisdom to remain silent at times! *(ARNOLD'S voice is heard calling "KITTY")* Go, dear. Come back as soon as you can. *(JIMMY takes KITTY'S hands in his; looks lovingly into her eyes; draws her to him, when he remembers that BILLIE is in the room; glances towards BILLIE; lets KITTY go; comedy business. KITTY exits R. JIMMY smiles at BILLIE, who is standing with fear in his heart and in every one of his features. JIMMY smiles; whistles; suddenly registers that he notices something: JIMMY'S alert eye sees the wire extending down the leg of the desk; BILLIE is about to say something when JIMMY quickly motions to him to say nothing. JIMMY, very mysteriously, walks around desk, scrutinizing it from all angles as JOHN T. enters R.; rushes to JIMMY)*

JOHN. My boy—— *(Clasps JIMMY'S hands)*

JIMMY. J. T.!

JOHN. I've just come from the Jail. They told me you were here under the surveillance of two officers.

JIMMY. (*Laughs*) I started out with one, but the force was enlarged.

JOHN. My boy, what does it mean?

JIMMY. All noted individuals are "chaperoned" free of charge by the United States Government.

JOHN. Do you know everything points to your favor? The books are in excellent condition. Even Higgins and Bartlett admit they have done you an injustice. They demand to be given back the amount of shares they originally held in this company. But that's impossible.

JIMMY. You BOUGHT their shares?

JOHN. Yes. I now own forty thousand, half of which I shall give to you.

JIMMY. J. T., don't get reckless.

JOHN. No amount of talk on your part can make me change my mind. You heard about the ticket?

JIMMY. Kitty told me.

JOHN. It will be only a matter of a few hours at the most before you are released. I'm going down to Judge Marlow now. See you later. (*JOHN exits R.* JIMMY quickly motions to BILLIE to remain silent. JIMMY quickly glances to L.)

JIMMY. (*Tense, but quiet*) Sit down, Billie. (*BILLIE sits R. JIMMY sits L.*) Good God, to be innocent—and yet suspected. Boy, I hope you'll never know what that means. (*Rises; appears to be in evident distress*) I tell you, there's only one way to THINK—that's the RIGHT WAY—only one way to LIVE—that's the RIGHT WAY. (*Appears to be in agony of mind*) If only he—HE had lived that way—all this would never have happened. (*Back of desk*)

BILLIE. He? Who? What do you mean?

JIMMY. (*Pulls out a telegram from his pocket;*

shows it to BILLIE) Look! Here's a telegram. I received it last week. Read.

BILLIE. (*Reads gram*) "Jake Conley dead." Who's Jake Conley?

JIMMY. (*Turns to L. as he speaks plainly*) The man who held up that train at the Devil's Curve on the morning of April the Second. I was traveling with him. He—well, when I next saw him, he seemed crazed, wild-eyed—— Oh, I don't want to think of it.

BILLIE. But——

JIMMY. You think it strange that I allowed suspicion to fall on me? I did that to save his wife—from learning the truth. It's a big thing, boy, to keep a woman from being miserable. (*OFFICER enters from L. BILLIE has put telegram on desk. OFFICER walks slowly around room for a moment. JIMMY remains silent. OFFICER reaches desk; his eye on gram*) Well? I'm ready, Officer—— (*OFFICER has picked up gram; reads it; he came into room for purpose of reading gram. JIMMY winks to BILLIE to keep silent*)

OFFICER. (*Calling into room at L.*) Never mind, Muggins!

JIMMY. Never mind? Never mind what, Officer?

OFFICER. (*Points to under desk*) Oh—see for yourself. (*Smiles*)

JIMMY. (*Pretends to examine the dictograph*) What's all this?

OFFICER. That's something that helps us get a man when—WE WANT HIM.

JIMMY. (*Pretending surprise*) Really????

OFFICER. (*Thinks he is some smart man*) Yes siree!

JIMMY. (*Smiling*) Officer, how many girls have called you "CUTEY"???

"IN WALKED JIMMY"

OFFICER. (*Becomes very official-like*) You don't mind if I take this for a moment?

JIMMY. (*As OFFICER picks up telegram*) With my compliments! (*OFFICER exits L. Door is closed with a bang. JIMMY realizes someone is still listening. He speaks in a peculiar tone*) This is what they call a dictograph. I wonder why they put that in here.

BILLIE. Why did they?

JIMMY. If I knew, I wouldn't be wondering. Unless they wanted to get ME. (*Still looking at the wire and receiver with interest*) Strange how some persons suspect others of doing wrong. Have you a pencil with you? (*BILLIE hands him a pencil*) Thanks! Address an envelope for me. (*JIMMY begins to write something on back of letter which he takes from his pocket. BILLIE picks up envelope from desk*) To Mrs. Jake Conley. I'm going up to the city to see her. We were school pals together. Boy, when I get back——

BILLIE. I want to work for you. I'm going to stay here and learn to make shoes. Will you teach me?

JIMMY. Certainly. When I get through with you, you'll be so superfine we'll have to pure-food-label you, "Guaranteed, no taint or artificial colors." (*OFFICER enters L. JIMMY again surprised*) Hello, you're back. (*OFFICER puts gram on table*)

OFFICER. (*Calling into room at L.*) All right, Muggins.

JIMMY. I don't understand this, Officer.

OFFICER. I beg your pardon, sir, but there are certain formalities of the law that must be dispensed with—before you can be released. It will be only a matter of an hour or so—before you're cleared. In the meantime, I've got to stick around.

JIMMY. (*Pushing the OFFICER to the L.*) If you

must "stick," "stick" in there. And do me the favor of falling ASLEEP. I've some business to attend to—— (*Winks at the OFFICER*) You know the kind I mean—when dreams come true—— (*OFFICER laughs, knowingly*) You're just handsome when you smile like that!!!! (*OFFICER exits L., laughing.* JIMMY disconnects the dictograph; to BILLIE, tensely) Whew! That was a close shave.

BILLIE. How did you know that desk was wired?

JIMMY. I suspected I wasn't being brought here just for an "airing." When I saw you, I knew they wanted to get us together—alone. I surmised we were having an audience, so I played up to the climax. When I saw the wires and that little receiver—I kept on playing into it—even after the Officer suggested I wasn't wanted any longer.

BILLIE. But the telegram?

JIMMY. I had a friend send that to me. I asked for it the day you came back to this town. I knew the time would come when I could use it to save you.

BILLIE. Who is Jake Conley?

JIMMY. (*Lightly*) Don't you know?

BILLIE. No.

JIMMY. I don't—either!

(WARN CURTAIN)

BILLIE. You mean no such person ever lived?

JIMMY. I mean there's no detective in the world so clever but what he can't be FOOLED! (*BILLIE clasps JIMMY's hand and looks gratefully into JIMMY's eyes as KITTY enters R.*)

BILLIE. You're the best friend I've ever had.

JIMMY. (*Releasing BILLIE's hand; buoyantly*) Kitty, my girl, are you prepared? Within an hour or two, it's to that Right Reverend for us. (*He wants to take KITTY in his arms; in order to get BILLIE out of the room, he says jovially*) Good-bye,

Billie. (*BILLIE understands; smiles*) Kid, you're just handsome when you smile like that! (*BILLIE exits R., laughing. JIMMY stands, looking at KITTY with pride and love. KITTY registers worry*) What is it, dear?

KITTY. I love you, dear. Haven't I the right to ask you just one question? It's on my mind. I keep asking myself—who are you? Won't you answer me that, truthfully? (*Pause. Then JIMMY takes her into his arms*) Who are you?

JIMMY. You'll not tell anyone?

KITTY. No. Not a soul. (*Lights get lower*)

JIMMY. Honor bright?

KITTY. (*Mischievously; as she looks up into his eyes*) Cross my heart.

JIMMY. Well, then—I'm——

KITTY. Yes——

JIMMY. I am——

KITTY. Yes——

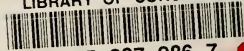
JIMMY. The leading man in this play! (*JIMMY hugs KITTY to him tighter, and plants a kiss upon her lips, as THE CURTAIN QUICKLY FALLS*)







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